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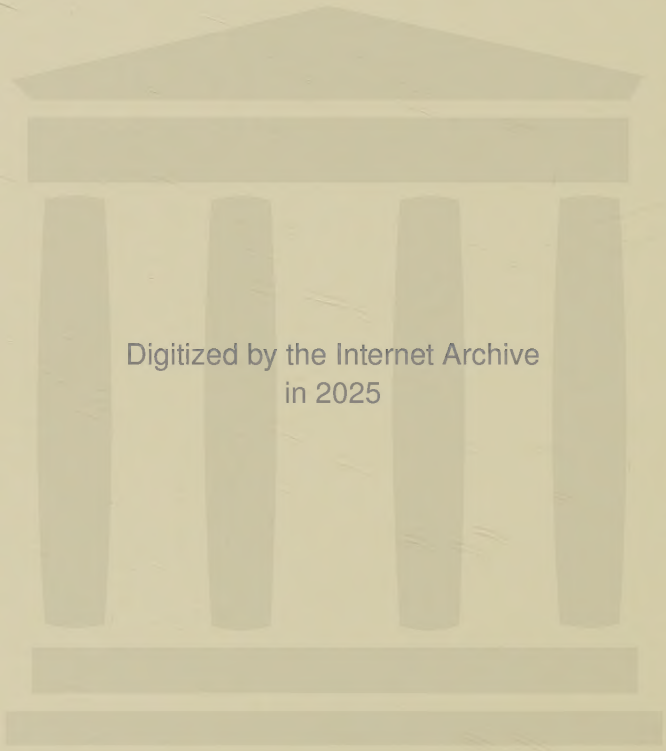
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PLAYS

BY

ALEXANDER OSTROVSKY

PLAYS.

BY

ALEXANDER NIKOLAEVICH OSTROVSKY

A PROTÉGÉE OF THE MISTRESS

POVERTY IS NO CRIME

SIN AND SORROW ARE COMMON TO ALL

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR—WE'LL SETTLE IT OURSELVES

A TRANSLATION FROM THE RUSSIAN, EDITED BY

GEORGE RAPALL NOYES

AMS PRESS
NEW YORK

Reprinted from the edition of 1917, New York
First AMS EDITION published 1969
Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 70-98632

AMS PRESS, INC.
New York, N.Y. 10003

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PREFATORY NOTE

The following persons have co-operated in preparing the present volume: Leonard Bacon (verses in "Poverty Is No Crime)," Florence Noyes (suggestions on the style of all the plays), George Rapall Noyes (introduction, revision of the translation, and suggestions on the style of all the plays), Jane W. Robertson ("Poverty Is No Crime"), Minnie Eline Sadicoff ("Sin and Sorrow Are Common to All"), John Laurence Seymour ("It's a Family Affair—We'll Settle It Ourselves" and "A Protégée of the Mistress"). The system of transliteration for Russian names used in the book is with very small variations that recommended for "popular" use by the School of Russian Studies in the University of Liverpool.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	3
A Protégée of the Mistress	11
Poverty Is No Crime	67
Sin and Sorrow Are Common to All	137
It's a Family Affair—We'll Settle It Ourselves	215

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Alexander Nikoláyevich Ostróvsky (1823–86) is the great Russian dramatist of the central decades of the nineteenth century, of the years when the realistic school was all-powerful in Russian literature, of the period when Turgénev, Dostoyévsky, and Tolstóy created a literature of prose fiction that has had no superior in the world's history. His work in the drama takes its place beside theirs in the novel. Obviously inferior as it is in certain ways, it yet sheds light on an important side of Russian life that they left practically untouched. Turgénev and Tolstóy were gentlemen by birth, and wrote of the fortunes of the Russian nobility or of the peasants whose villages bordered on the nobles' estates. Dostoyévsky, though not of this landed-proprietor school, still dealt with the nobility, albeit with its waifs and strays. None of these masters more than touched the Russian merchants, that homespun moneyed class, crude and coarse, grasping and mean, without the idealism of their educated neighbors in the cities or the homely charm of the peasants from whom they themselves sprang, yet gifted with a rough force and determination not often found among the cultivated aristocracy. This was the field that Ostróvsky made peculiarly his own.

With this merchant class Ostróvsky was familiar from his childhood. Born in 1823, he was the son of a lawyer doing business among the Moscow tradesmen. After finishing his course at the gymnasium and spending three years at the University of Moscow, he entered the civil service in 1843 as an employee of the Court of Conscience in Moscow, from

which he transferred two years later to the Court of Commerce, where he continued until he was discharged from the service in 1851. Hence both by his home life and by his professional training he was brought into contact with types such as Bolshóv and Rizpolózhensky in "It's a Family Affair —We'll Settle It Ourselves."

As a boy of seventeen Ostróvsky had already developed a passion for the theatre. His literary career began in the year 1847, when he read to a group of Moscow men of letters his first experiments in dramatic composition. In this same year he printed one scene of "A Family Affair," which appeared in complete form three years later, in 1850, and established its author's reputation as a dramatist of undoubted talent. Unfortunately, by its mordant but true picture of commercial morals, it aroused against him the most bitter feelings among the Moscow merchants. Discussion of the play in the press was prohibited, and representation of it on the stage was out of the question. It was reprinted only in 1859, and then, at the instance of the censorship, in an altered form, in which a police officer appears at the end of the play as a *deus ex machina*, arrests Podkhalyúzin, and announces that he will be sent to Siberia. In this mangled version the play was acted in 1861; in its original text it did not appear on the stage until 1881. Besides all this, the drama was the cause of the dismissal of Ostróvsky from the civil service, in 1851. The whole episode illustrates the difficulties under which the great writers of Russia have constantly labored under a despotic government.

Beginning with 1852 Ostróvsky gave his whole strength to literary work. He is exceptional among Russian authors in devoting himself almost exclusively to the theatre. The latest edition of his works contains forty-eight pieces written entirely by him, and six produced in collaboration with

other authors. It omits his translations from foreign dramatists, which were of considerable importance, including, for example, a version of Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew."

The plays of Ostróvsky are of varied character, including dramatic chronicles based on early Russian history, and a fairy drama, "Little Snowdrop." His real strength lay, however, in the drama of manners, giving realistic pictures of Russian life among the Russian city classes and the minor nobility. Here he was recognized, from the time of the appearance on the stage of his first pieces, in 1853 and the following years, as without a rival among Russian authors for the theatre. Of this realistic drama the present volume gives four characteristic examples.

The tone of "Poverty Is No Crime" (1854), written only four years after "A Family Affair," is in sharp contrast with that of its predecessor. In the earlier play Ostróvsky had adopted a satiric tone that proved him a worthy disciple of Gógol, the great founder of Russian realism. Not one lovable character appears in that gloomy picture of merchant life in Moscow; even the old mother repels us by her stupidity more than she attracts us by her kindliness. No ray of light penetrates the "realm of darkness"—to borrow a famous phrase from a Russian critic—conjured up before us by the young dramatist. In "Poverty Is No Crime" we see the other side of the medal. Ostróvsky had now been affected by the Slavophile school of writers and thinkers, who found in the traditions of Russian society treasures of kindliness and love that they contrasted with the superficial glitter of Western civilization. Life in Russia is varied as elsewhere, and Ostróvsky could change his tone without doing violence to realistic truth. The tradesmen had not wholly lost the patriarchal charm of their peasant fathers. A poor appren-

tice is the hero of "Poverty Is No Crime," and a wealthy manufacturer the villain of the piece. Good-heartedness is the touchstone by which Ostróvsky tries character, and this may be hidden beneath even a drunken and degraded exterior. The scapegrace, Lyubím Tortsóv, has a sound Russian soul, and at the end of the play rouses his hard, grasping brother, who has been infatuated by a passion for aping foreign fashions, to his native Russian worth.

Just as "Poverty Is No Crime" shows the influence of the Slavophile movement, "A Protégée of the Mistress" (1859) was inspired by the great liberal movement that bore fruit in the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Ostróvsky here departed from town to a typical country manor, and produced a work kindred in spirit to Turgénev's "Sportsman's Sketches," or "Mumu." In a short play, instinct with simple poetry, he shows the suffering brought about by serfdom: the petty tyranny of the landed proprietor, which is the more galling because it is practised with a full conviction of virtue on the part of the tyrant; and the crushed natures of the human cattle under his charge.

> The master grim, the lowly serf that tills his lands;
> With lordly pride the first sends forth commands,
> The second cringes like a slave.
>
> —*Nekrasov.*

Despite the unvarying success of his dramas on the stage, Ostróvsky for a long time derived little financial benefit from them. Discouragement and overwork wrecked his health, and were undoubtedly responsible for the gloomy tone of a series of plays written in the years following 1860, of which "Sin and Sorrow Are Common to All" (1863) is a typical example. Here the dramatist sketches a tragic incident arising from the conflict of two social classes, the petty

tradesmen and the nobility. From the coarse environment of the first emerge honest, upright natures like Krasnóv; from the superficial, dawdling culture of the second come weak-willed triflers like Babáyev. The sordid plot sweeps on to its inevitable conclusion with true tragic force.

Towards the end of his life Ostróvsky gained the material prosperity that was his due. "There was no theatre in Russia in which his plays were not acted" (Skabichévsky). From 1874 to his death he was the president of the Society of Russian Dramatic Authors. In 1885 he received the important post of artistic director of the Moscow government theatres; the harassing duties of the position proved too severe for his weak constitution, and he passed away in the next year.

As a dramatist, Ostróvsky is above all else a realist; no more thoroughly natural dramas than his were ever composed. Yet as a master of realistic technique he must not be compared with Ibsen, or even with many less noted men among modern dramatists. His plays have not the neat, concise construction that we prize to-day. Pages of dialogue sometimes serve no purpose except to make a trifle clearer the character of the actors, or perhaps slightly to heighten the impression of commonplace reality. Even in "Sin and Sorrow" and "A Protégée" whole passages merely illustrate the background against which the plot is set rather than help forward the action itself. Many plays, such as "A Family Affair," end with relatively unimportant pieces of dialogue. Of others we are left to guess even the conclusion of the main action: will Nádya in "A Protégée" submit to her degrading fate, or will she seek refuge in the pond?

Ostróvsky rarely uses the drama to treat of great moral or social problems. He is not a revolutionary thinker or an

opponent of existing society; his ideal, like that of his predecessor Gógol, is of honesty, kindliness, generosity, and loyalty in a broad, general way to the traditions of the past. He attacks serfdom not as an isolated leader of a forlorn hope, but as an adherent of a great party of moderate reformers.

Thus Ostróvsky's strength lies in a sedate, rather commonplace realism. One of the most national of authors, he loses much in translation.[1] His style is racy, smacking of the street or the counting-house; he is one of the greatest masters of the Russian vernacular. To translate his Moscow slang into the equivalent dialect of New York would be merely to transfer Broadway associations to the Ilyínka. A translator can only strive to be colloquial and familiar, giving up the effort to render the varying atmosphere of the different plays. And Ostróvsky's characters are as natural as his language. Pig-headed merchants; apprentices, knavish or honest as the case may be; young girls with a touch of poetry in their natures, who sober down into kindly housewives; tyrannical serf-owners and weak-willed sons of noble families: such is the material of which he builds his entertaining, wholesome, mildly thoughtful dramas. Men and women live and love, trade and cheat in Ostróvsky as they do in the world around us. Now and then a murder or a suicide appears in his pages as it does in those of the daily papers, but hardly more frequently. In him we can study the life of Russia as he knew it, crude and coarse and at times cruel, yet full of homely virtue and aspiration. Of his complex panorama the present volume gives a brief glimpse.

[1] Ostróvsky it may be remarked, has been singularly neglected by translators from the Russian. The only previous versions of complete plays in English known to the present writer are "The Storm," by Constance Garnett (London and Chicago, 1899, and since reprinted), and "Incompatibility of Temper" and "A Domestic Picture" (in "The Humour of Russia," by E. L. Voynich, London and New York, 1895).

A PROTÉGÉE OF THE MISTRESS

SCENES FROM VILLAGE LIFE IN FOUR PICTURES

CHARACTERS

MADAM ULANBÉKOV,[1] *an old woman of nearly sixty, tall, thin, with a large nose, and thick, black eyebrows; of an Eastern type of face, with a small mustache. She is powdered and rouged, and dressed richly in black. She is owner of two thousand serfs.*

LEONÍD, *her son, eighteen years old, very handsome, resembling his mother slightly. Wears summer dress. Is studying in Petersburg.*

VASILÍSA PEREGRÍNOVNA, *a toady of* MADAM ULANBÉKOV'S, *an old maid of forty. Scanty hair, parted slantingly, combed high, and held by a large comb. She is continually smiling with a wily expression, and she suffers from toothache; about her throat is a yellow shawl fastened by a brooch.*

POTÁPYCH, *the old steward. Tie and vest, white; coat black. Has an air of importance.*

NADÉZHDA[2] (*called* NÁDYA), *seventeen years old, favorite protégée of* MADAM ULANBÉKOV; *dressed like a young lady.*

GAVRÍLOVNA, *the housekeeper; an elderly woman, plump, with an open countenance.*

GRÍSHA, *a boy of nineteen, a favorite of the mistress, dandified in dress, wearing a watch with a gold chain. He is handsome, curly-headed, with a foolish expression.*

NEGLIGÉNTOV, *a clerk in a government office; a very disreputable young man.*

LÍZA, *a housemaid, not bad-looking, but very stout and snub-nosed; in a white dress, of which the bodice is short and ill-fitting. About her neck is a little red kerchief; her hair is very much pomaded.*

A peasant girl, a footman, and a housemaid: mute personages.

The action takes place in the springtime, at the suburban estate of MADAM ULANBÉKOV

[1] The name hints at a Circassian origin and a tyrannical disposition. Ostróvsky frequently gives to the persons in his plays names that suggest their characteristics.

[2] Hope.

A PROTÉGÉE OF THE MISTRESS

I

Part of a densely grown garden; on the right benches; at the back a rail fence, separating the garden from a field

SCENE I

Enter NADYA *and* LIZA

NADYA. No, Liza, don't say that: what comparison could there be between country and city life!

LIZA. What is there so specially fine about city life?

NADYA. Well, everything is different there; the people themselves, and even the whole social order are entirely different. [*She sits down on a bench*] When I was in Petersburg with the mistress, one had only to take a look at the sort of people who came to see us, and at the way our rooms were decorated; besides, the mistress took me with her everywhere; we even went on the steamer to Peterhof, and to Tsarskoe Selo.

LIZA. That was pretty fine, I suppose.

NADYA. Yes indeed, it was so splendid that words can't describe it! Because, no matter how much I may tell you about it, if you haven't seen it yourself, you'll never understand. And when a young lady, the mistress's niece, was visiting us, I used to chat with her the whole evening, and sometimes we even sat through the night.

LIZA. What in the world did you talk about with her?

NADYA. Well, naturally, for the most part about the ways of high society, about her dancing partners, and about the officers of the guard. And as she was often at balls, she told me what they talked about there, and whom she had liked best. Only how fine those young ladies are!

LIZA. What do you mean?

NADYA. They're very gay. And where did they learn all that? Afterwards we lived a whole winter in Moscow. Seeing all this, my dear, you try to act like a born lady yourself. Your very manners change, and you try to have a way of talking of your own.

LIZA. But why should we try to be fine ladies? Much good it does!

NADYA. Much good, you say? Well, you see the ladies promised to marry me off, so I am trying to educate myself, so that no one'll be ashamed to take me. You know what sort of wives our officials have; well, what a lot they are! And I understand life and society ten times better than they do. Now I have just one hope: to marry a good man, so I may be the mistress of my own household. You just watch then how I'll manage the house; it will be no worse at my house than at any fine lady's.

LIZA. God grant your wish! But do you notice how the young master is running after you?

NADYA. Much good it'll do him! Of course, he's a pretty fellow, you might even say, a beauty; only he has nothing to expect from me; because I am decidedly not of that sort; and on the other hand, I'm trying now in every way that there may be no scandal of any sort about me. I have but one thing in mind: to get married.

LIZA. Even married life is sometimes no joy! You may get such a husband that.... God help you!

NADYA. What a joy it would be to me to marry a really

fine man! I, thank God, am able to distinguish between people: who is good, who bad. That's easy to see at once from their manners and conversation. But the mistress is so unreasonable in holding us in so strictly, and in keeping everlasting watch over us! Indeed, it's insulting to me! I'm a girl that knows how to take care of herself without any watching.

LIZA. It looks as if the master were coming.

NADYA. Then let's go. [*They rise and go out.*

LEONID *comes in with a gun.*

SCENE II

LEONID *and then* POTAPYCH

LEONID. Wait a bit! Hey, you, where are you going? Why are they always running away from me? You can't catch them anyhow! [*He stands musing. Silence.*

A GIRL *sings behind the rail fence:*

"No man may hope to flee the sting
Of cruel affliction's pain;
New love within the heart may sing—
Regret still in its train."

LEONID. [*Running up to the fence*] What a pretty girl you are!

GIRL. Pretty, but not yours!

LEONID. Come here!

GIRL. Where?

LEONID. To me in the garden.

GIRL. Why go to you?

LEONID. I'll go to town and buy you earrings.

GIRL. You're only a kid!

She laughs loudly and goes out. LEONID *stands with*

bowed head musing. POTAPYCH *enters in hunting-dress, with a gun.*

POTAPYCH. One can't keep up with you, sir; you have young legs.

LEONID. [*All the while lost in thought*] All this, Potapych, will be mine.

POTAPYCH. All yours, sir, and we shall all be yours.... Just as we served the old master, so we must serve you.... Because you're of the same blood.... That's the right way. Of course, may God prolong your dear mamma's days....

LEONID. Then I shan't enter the service, Potapych; I shall come directly to the country, and here I shall live.

POTAPYCH. You must enter the service, sir.

LEONID. What's that you say? Much I must! They'll make me a copying clerk! [*He sits down upon a bench.*

POTAPYCH. No, sir, why should you work yourself? That's not the way to do things! They'll find a position for you—of the most gentlemanly, delicate sort; your clerks will work, but you'll be their chief, over all of them. And promotions will come to you of themselves.

LEONID. Perhaps they will make me vice-governor, or elect me marshal of the nobility.

POTAPYCH. It's not improbable.

LEONID. Well, and when I'm vice-governor, shall you be afraid of me?

POTAPYCH. Why should I be afraid? Let others cringe, but for us it's all the same. You are our master: that's honor enough for us.

LEONID. [*Not hearing*] Tell me, Potapych, have we many pretty girls here?

POTAPYCH. Why, really, sir, if you think it over, why shouldn't there be girls? There are some on the estate,

and among the house servants; only it must be said that in these matters the household is very strictly run. Our mistress, owing to her strict life and her piety, looks after that very carefully. Now just take this: she herself marries off the protégées and housemaids whom she likes. If a man pleases her, she marries the girl off to him, and even gives her a dowry, not a big one—needless to say. There are always two or three protégées on the place. The mistress takes a little girl from some one or other and brings her up; and when she is seventeen or eighteen years old, then, without any talk, she marries her off to some clerk or townsman, just as she takes a notion, and sometimes even to a nobleman. Ah, yes, sir! Only what an existence for these protégées, sir! Misery!

LEONID. But why?

POTAPYCH. They have a hard time. The lady says: "I have found you a prospective husband, and now," she says, "the wedding will be on such and such a day, and that's an end to it; and don't one of you dare to argue about it!" It's a case of get along with you to the man you're told to. Because, sir, I reason this way: who wants to see disobedience in a person he's brought up? And sometimes it happens that the bride doesn't like the groom, nor the groom the bride: then the lady falls into a great rage. She even goes out of her head. She took a notion to marry one protégée to a petty shopkeeper in town; but he, an unpolished individual, was going to resist. "The bride doesn't please me," he said, "and, besides, I don't want to get married yet." So the mistress complained at once to the town bailiff and to the priest: well, they brought the blockhead round.

LEONID. You don't say.

POTAPYCH. Yes, sir. And even if the mistress sees a girl at one of her acquaintances', she immediately looks up a hus-

band for her. Our mistress reasons this way: that they are stupid; that if she doesn't look after them closely now, they'll just waste their life and never amount to anything. That's the way, sir. Some people, because of their stupidity, hide girls from the mistress, so that she may never set eyes on them; because if she does, it's all up with the girls.

LEONID. And so she treats other people's girls the same way?

POTAPYCH. Other people's, too. She extends her care to everybody. She has such a kind heart that she worries about everybody. She even gets angry if they do anything without her permission. And the way she looks after her protegées is just a wonder. She dresses them as if they were her own daughters. Sometimes she has them eat with her; and she doesn't make them do any work. "Let everybody look," says the mistress, "and see how my protégées live; I want every one to envy them," she says.

LEONID. Well, now, that's fine, Potapych.

POTAPYCH. And what a touching little sermon she reads them when they're married! "You," she says, "have lived with me in wealth and luxury, and have had nothing to do; now you are marrying a poor man, and will live your life in poverty, and will work, and will do your duty. And now forget," she says, "how you lived here, because not for you I did all this; I was merely diverting myself, but you must never even think of such a life; always remember your insignificance, and of what station you are." And all this so feelingly that there are tears in her own eyes.

LEONID. Well, now, that's fine.

POTAPYCH. I don't know how to describe it, sir. Somehow they all get tired of married life later; they mostly pine away.

LEONID. Why do they pine away, Potapych?

POTAPYCH. Must be they don't like it, if they pine away.

LEONID. That's queer.

POTAPYCH. The husbands mostly turn out ruffians.

LEONID. Is that so?

POTAPYCH. Everybody hopes to get one of our protégées, because the mistress right away becomes his patroness. Now in the case of these she marries to government clerks, there's a good living for the husband; because if they want to drive him out of the court, or have done so, he goes at once to our mistress with a complaint, and she's a regular bulwark for him; she'll bother the governor himself. And then the government clerk can get drunk or anything else, and not be afraid of anybody, unless he is insubordinate or steals a lot....

LEONID. But, say, Potapych, why is it that the girls run away from me?

POTAPYCH. How can they help running? They must run, sir!

LEONID. Why must they?

POTAPYCH. Hm! Why? Why, because, as you are still under age, the mistress wants to watch over you as she ought to; well, and she watches over them, too.

LEONID. She watches us, ha, ha, ha!

POTAPYCH. Yes, sir. That's the truth! She was talking about that. You're a child, just like a dove, but, well—the girls are foolish. [*Silence*] What next, sir? It's your mamma's business to be strict, because she is a lady. But why should you mind her! You ought to act for yourself, as all young gentlemen do. You don't have to suffer because she's strict. Why should you let others get ahead of you? That'd disgrace you.

LEONID. Well, well, but I don't know how to talk to the girls.

POTAPYCH. But what's the use of talking to them a long time? What about? What kind of sciences would you talk about with them? Much they understand such stuff! You're just the master, and that's all.

LEONID. [*Glances to one side*] Who's this coming? That's Nadya, evidently. Ah, Potapych, how pretty she is!

POTAPYCH. She is related to me, sir, my niece. Her father was set free by the late master; he was employed in a confectioner's in Moscow. When her mother died, her mistress took and brought her up, and is awful fond of her. And because her father is dead, why, now, she's an orphan. She's a good girl.

LEONID. Looks as if they were coming this way.

POTAPYCH. Well, let 'em.

GAVRILOVNA *and* NADYA *enter.*

SCENE III

The same, GAVRILOVNA *and* NADYA

GAVRILOVNA. How do you do, good master?

LEONID. [*Bows*] How do you do?

GAVRILOVNA. Well, master, I suppose you're bored in the country?

LEONID. No, not at all.

GAVRILOVNA. What, not bored yet! Why, you see it's like a monastery here; they look after you with a hundred eyes. Well, as for you, it goes without saying, you're a young gentleman, you ought to have some amusement; but you can't. It's no great joy to shoot ducks!

[*She laughs.*

LEONID. [*Going up to* GAVRILOVNA] Yes, yes, Gavrilovna.

NADYA. [*To* GAVRILOVNA] Let's go.

GAVRILOVNA. Where do you want to go? Now, seeing that the mistress isn't at home, you ought to have a little fun with the young master. That's what young folks need. And what a clever girl she is, master! In talking, and in everything.

NADYA. Come, what's the use!

GAVRILOVNA. Well, there's no harm in it! I was young once. I didn't run away from the gentlemen, and you see they didn't eat me. Perhaps even he won't bite you. Quit playing the prude, and stay here! But I'm going to get the tea ready! Good-by, good master! [*She goes out.*

LEONID. Why did you not wish to remain with me?

POTAPYCH. What's this, sir! You talk to her as if she were a young lady! Call her Nadya!

LEONID. What are you afraid of, Nadya?

NADYA *is silent.*

POTAPYCH. Talk! What are you keeping still for? And I'm going, sir; I must get dressed for tea, too. [*He goes out.*

SCENE IV

LEONID, NADYA, *and then* LIZA

NADYA. Of course I'm a girl of humble position, but, indeed, even we do not want anybody to speak evil of us. Pray consider yourself, after such talk, who would marry me?

LEONID. Are you going to get married?

NADYA. Yes, sir. Every girl hopes to get married some time.

LEONID. But have you a suitor?

NADYA. Not yet, sir.

LEONID. [*Timidly*] If you have no suitor, then, maybe you're in love with somebody?

NADYA. You want to know a lot! Well, no, I needn't fib about it, I'm not in love with anybody, sir.

LEONID. [*With great joy*] Then love me!

NADYA. It's impossible to force the heart, sir.

LEONID. Why? Don't you like me?

NADYA. Well, how could I help liking you? But I'm not your equal! What sort of love is that? Clean ruin! Here comes Liza running after me, I suppose. Good-by. Good luck to you! [*She goes away.*

LIZA *comes in.*

LIZA. Master, if you please! Your mamma has come.

LEONID. Liza!

LIZA. [*Approaching*] What is it, please?

LEONID. [*He embraces* LIZA; *she trembles with pleasure*] Why won't Nadya love me?

LIZA. [*Affectedly*] What are you talking about, master! Girls of our sort must look out for themselves!

LEONID. Look out for yourselves how?

LIZA. [*Looks him in the face and smiles*] Why, everybody knows. What are you talking like a child for?

LEONID. [*Sadly*] What shall I do now? Indeed, I don't know. They all run away from me.

LIZA. But don't lose courage; just make love a little bit. Heavens, our hearts aren't of stone!

LEONID. But see here! I asked her: she said she didn't love me.

LIZA. Well, if you aren't a queer one! Whoever asked girls right out whether they were in love or not! Even if one of us girls was in love, she wouldn't say so.

LEONID. Why?

LIZA. Because she's bashful. Only let me go, sir! [*She gets free*] There goes the old fury!

LEONID. Come out here into the garden after supper, when mamma goes to bed.

LIZA. You don't lose any time!

LEONID. Please come.

LIZA. Well, we'll see later. [VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA *enters*] Master, please come to tea, your mamma is waiting.

LEONID. All right, I'm coming.

SCENE V

The same and VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. I saw you, my dear, I saw you.

LIZA. There was nothing to see. [*She goes out.*

LEONID. Well, what did you see? What are you going to complain about? I shall simply say that you lie. Whom are they going to believe quicker, you or me?

[*He makes a grimace and goes out.*

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. There, that's the way they all treat me. I can't stand it! My heart is just sick. I'm a martyr in this world. [*She plucks a flower viciously and pulls off its petals*] I believe that if I had the power I'd do this to all of you! I'd do this to all of you! I'd do this to all of you! You just wait, you young scamp! I'll catch you. My heart boils, it boils, it boils over! And now I must smirk before the mistress as if I were a fool. What a life! What a life! The sinners in hell do not suffer as I suffer in this house! [*She goes out.*

II

A parlor. Rear centre, a door opening into the garden. Doors at the sides; in the centre a round table.

SCENE I

From a side door there enter a footman with a samovar and a maid with a tea-service; they place both on the table and go out. Gavrilovna *and* Potapych *enter after them.* Gavrilovna *prepares the tea.* Vasilisa Peregrinovna *enters from the garden.*

Vasilisa Peregrinovna. My dear, you always serve me only water.

Gavrilovna. It isn't good for you to drink strong tea, madam.

Vasilisa Peregrinovna. It's not your business to worry about me!

Gavrilovna. It dries up the chest, and you're all dried up as it is.

Vasilisa Peregrinovna. What a life! What a life! I am not dried up from tea-drinking, my dear, but from the insults of the world.

Gavrilovna. Insults! You insult everybody yourself, as if something were stirring you up!

Vasilisa Peregrinovna. Don't you dare talk to me like that! Just remember who you are. I once owned serfs myself; at my place, such people as you didn't dare peep, they walked the chalk. I didn't let your sort get high-headed!

GAVRILOVNA. That time's gone by. God gives a vicious cow no horns.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Oh, you monsters, wretches! You want me to die. Soon I shall die, soon; my soul feels its fast approaching end! [*Raising her eyes heavenward*] Shelter me from men, O lid of my coffin! Take me to thee, moist earth! Then you'll be happy; then you'll be joyful!

POTAPYCH. We? What's it to us?.... Tend to your own business.

GAVRILOVNA. While God is patient with your sins.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. For my sins I have already been tortured here. I mourn now the sins of others.

GAVRILOVNA. It would be better for you not to bother with other people's sins. Now you're getting ready to die, yet you talk about the sins of others. Aren't you afraid?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Afraid of what? Why should I be afraid?

GAVRILOVNA. Of that little black man with the hook. He's waiting for you now, I guess.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Where am I? Where am I? My God! Just as if I were in a slough; monsters....

From the left side MADAM ULANBEKOV, NADYA, LIZA, *and* GRISHA *come in.*

SCENE II

The same and MADAM ULANBEKOV, GRISHA, NADYA, *and* LIZA.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Did our benefactress deign to attend prayer service?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Yes, I went to vespers in town; to-day is a holiday there.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Did you distribute generous alms among the people present?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. No, I only called in Pustaya Street at old man Negligentov's. He asked me to set up his nephew; you see, the nephew is my godson. I'm sorry for these people!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. And you, dear soul, are a benefactress to all. To all alike, to all! You do favors to people who aren't even worth your looking at.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. [*Sits down*] Never mind, my dear. One must do good to his neighbor.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. But do they feel that good? Can they understand, heartless creatures, how great is your condescension to them?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. It's all the same to me, my dear! One must do good for his own sake, for his own soul. Then I stopped in to see the chief of police, and asked him to make Negligentov head-clerk.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. But, my benefactress, is he worthy?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Don't interrupt! A strange man, our chief of police! I ask him, and he says: "There's no job!" I say to him: "You evidently don't understand who's asking you?" "Well!" says he, "do you expect me to drive out a good man for your godson?" Churlish fellow! However, he promised!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. To think of his hesitating! I cannot understand how he could even talk back to you. Here his ill-breeding shows up at once. Maybe Negligentov, because of his life, isn't worth saying much about; nevertheless, the chief ought to do everything in the world for him for your sake, no matter how worthless a scamp Negligentov might be.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Don't you forget that he's my godson!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. And for that very reason, benefactress, I add: he is your godson; well, and that's all there is to it; the chief of police ought not to listen to any kind of gossip. And, besides, what things they do say! They say that he's utterly worthless, that his uncle got him a court job, but he won't stay with it. He was gone a whole week, they say, somewhere or other about three miles down the highroad, near the tavern, fishing. Yes, and that he is a drunkard beyond his years. But whose business is it? He must be worthy of it, since you ask it.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. I've never heard that. I've never seen him drunk; but I spoke to the chief of police on his behalf, because he's my godson. I take his mother's place.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. I know, benefactress, I know; every one knows that if you take a notion, you, my benefactress, can make a man out of mud; but if you don't take a notion to do so, he'll fall into insignificance no matter how brainy he may be. He's to blame himself, because he didn't deserve it!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. I'm sure I never did any one any harm.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Harm? You, who because of your angelic heart wouldn't hurt even a fly! Of course all we mortals are not without sins; you have done many things; you can't please everybody. Indeed, to tell the truth, my dear benefactress, there are people enough who complain about you.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Who complains about me? What a lie!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. It's impossible for you to know everything, dear benefactress. And it's not worth while for you, in your gentility, to trouble yourself about every low-

lived person. And though they do complain, what's the use of paying attention; are they worth your notice? Since you do so many good deeds for others, God will forgive you, our benefactress.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. All the same, I want to know whom I have offended?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Well, there are some persons, benefactress.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. [*Forcibly*] But who? Speak!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Don't be angry, benefactress! I spoke as I did because you yourself know how touchy people are nowadays—never satisfied.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You spoke as you did in order to cause me some unpleasantness.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. May my eyes burst if I did.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Well, I know you. You're never at rest in your own soul unless you're about to say something mean. You will please be more careful; otherwise you'll drive me out of patience one of these days; it'll be all the worse for you. [*Silence*] Serve the tea.

GAVRILOVNA. Right away, mistress.

She pours out two cups. POTAPYCH *hands them to* MADAM ULANBEKOV *and to* VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Pour Grisha a cup, too; he went with me to-day, and he's tired out.

GAVRILOVNA. Yes, mistress.

[*She pours out a cup and hands it to* GRISHA.

GRISHA. Why didn't you put more milk in it? Are you stingy, eh?

GAVRILOVNA. [*Adding milk*] As it is, you're fattened on milk, like a calf.

GRISHA *takes the cup and goes out through the door into the garden.*

MADAM ULANBEKOV. I have thought of marrying Nadya to Negligentov—with a decent settlement, of course. You say that he leads a bad life; consequently we must hasten the wedding. She is a girl of good principles, she'll hold him back, otherwise he'll ruin himself with his bachelor habits. Bachelor life is very bad for young men.

NADYA. [*To* LIZA] Do you hear, Liza? What's this? My God!

LIZA. You just have to listen, and you can't say a word.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. It's high time she was married, benefactress; why should she be hanging around here? And now your young son, the angel, has come.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Oh, be still! What are you thinking up now? Why, he's only a child!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. A child, benefactress! Well, there's nothing more to be said; God gave you a son as a joy and a consolation. And we can never feast our eyes enough on him. It's just as if the sunshine had come into our house. So good-natured, so merry, so gentle with every one! But he's already running after the girls so; he never lets one pass; and they, silly things, are tickled to death; they fairly snort with delight.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You're lying. He never has a chance to see the girls anywhere, I think; all day long they are in their own side of the house, and, besides, they never go anywhere.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Ah, benefactress, there are no locks to keep a girl in, once she takes a notion to do something.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You hear, Gavrilovna! Look after my girls. You know I won't have any loose conduct. You tell them that so they'll know I mean it. [*To* VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA] But no, there can't be anything like that. You're

merely disturbing me with your silly notions. What a dirty tongue you have! What business had you to chatter? And now I can't get the stuff out of my head! Keep watch, Gavrilovna!

GAVRILOVNA. What's the use of listening to her, mistress?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. But really, benefactress, am I saying anything bad? Would I dare to think any harm about him, that little angel? Of course he's still a child, he wants to frisk a little; but here he hasn't any companions, so he plays with the girls.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. There's poison on your tongue. [*She reflects.* POTAPYCH *takes the cups.* GAVRILOVNA *fills them and gives them back.* GRISHA *comes in from the garden, gives* GAVRILOVNA *a push, and makes a sign with his head that she is to pour him another cup.* GAVRILOVNA *does so.* GRISHA *goes out*] However, I must marry off Nadya.

NADYA. [*Almost weeping*] Mistress, you have shown me such kindness that I can't even express it. Forgive me for daring to speak to you now; but, because of your attitude towards me, I expected quite a different favor from you. In what respect have I displeased you now, mistress, that you wish to marry me to a drunkard?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. My dear, it's not for you to argue about that; you're just a girl. You ought to rely in all things upon me, your patroness. I brought you up, and I am even bound to establish you in life. And again, you ought not to forget this: that he is my godson. Rather, you ought to be thankful for the honor. And now I tell you once and for all: I do not like it when my girls argue, I simply do not like it, and that's all there is to it. That's a thing I cannot permit anybody. I've been accustomed, from my youth, to having people obey my every word; it's time you knew that! And it's very strange to me, my dear, that you

should presume to oppose me. I see that I have spoiled you; and you at once get conceited. [NADYA *weeps.*

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Benefactress, one must have feeling for his fellow creature, one must have feeling. But what kind of feelings can such as they have, save ingratitude?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. No one's talking to you! What are you mixing into everything for? [*To* NADYA, *sternly*] What new tale is this? Still crying! Let's have no more tears! [NADYA *weeps*] I'm talking to you. [*Rising slightly*] Your tears mean absolutely nothing to me! When I make up my mind to do a thing, I take a firm stand, and listen to no one on earth! [*She sits down*] And know, first of all, that your obstinacy will lead to nothing; you will simply anger me.

NADYA. [*Weeping*] I'm an orphan, mistress! Your will must be obeyed!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Well, I should say! Of course it must; because I brought you up; that's equal to giving you life itself.

LEONID *enters.*

SCENE III

The same and LEONID

LEONID. How are you, mamma?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. How are you, my dear? Where have you been?

LEONID. I went hunting with Potapych. I killed two ducks, mamma.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You don't spare your mother; the idea, going hunting in your state of health! You'll fall sick

again, God forbid! and then you'll simply kill me! Ah, my God, how I have suffered with that child! [*She muses.*

GAVRILOVNA. Some tea, master?

LEONID. No, thanks.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. [*To* VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA] When he was born, I was ill a very long time. Then he was always sickly, and he grew up puny. How many tears have I shed over him! Sometimes I would just look at him, and my tears would flow; no, it will never be my lot to see him in the uniform of the guardsmen! But it was most distressing of all for me when his father, owing to the boy's poor health, was unable to send him to a military school. How much it cost me to renounce the thought that he might become a soldier! For half a year I was ill. Just imagine to yourself, my dear, when he finishes his course, they will give him some rank or other, such as they give to any priest's son clerking in a government office! Isn't it awful? In the military service, especially in the cavalry, all ranks are aristocratic; one knows at once that even a junker is from the nobility. But what is a provincial secretary, or a titular councillor! Any one can be a titular councillor—even a merchant, a church-school graduate, a low-class townsman, if you please. You have only to study, then serve awhile. Why, one of the petty townsmen who is apt at learning will get a rank higher than his! That's the way of the world! That's the way of the world! Oh, dear! [*She turns away with a wave of her hand*] I don't like to pass judgment on anything that is instituted by higher authority, and won't permit others to do so, but, nevertheless, I don't approve of this system. I shall always say loudly that it's unjust, unjust.

LEONID. Why are Nadya's eyes red from crying?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. She hasn't been flogged for a long time.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. That's none of your business, my dear. Nadya, go away, you're not needed here.

[NADYA *goes out.*

LEONID. Well, I know why: you want to marry her off.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Whether I do or not, my dear, is my own business. Furthermore, I do not like to have any one meddle in my arrangements.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. What a clever young man you are; you know everything, you get into everything!

LEONID. Indeed, mamma dear, I don't mean to meddle in your arrangements. Only he's a drunkard.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. And that, again, is none of your business. Leave that to your mother's judgment.

LEONID. I'm only sorry for her, mamma.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. All very fine, my dear; but I should like to know from whom you heard that I'm going to marry Nadya. If one of the housemaids has....

LEONID. No, mamma, no.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. How could you find out otherwise? How did that get out? [*To* GAVRILOVNA] Find out without fail!

LEONID. No, indeed, mamma; the man she's going to marry told me.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. What sort of a man?

LEONID. I don't know what sort! He said he was a clerk in a government office....a peculiar surname: Negligentov. What a funny fellow he is! He says he's your godson, and that he's afraid of nobody. He's dancing in the garden now, drunk.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Drunk, in my house!

LEONID. If you want, I'll invite him in. Potapych, call Negligentov! He said that you were at his uncle's to-day, and that you promised to give him Nadya. Already he's

reckoning, in anticipation, how much income he will get in the court, or "savings," as he says. What a funny fellow! He showed me how they taught him at school. Do you want me to bring him in?

Enter POTAPYCH *and* NEGLIGENTOV.

SCENE IV

The same, NEGLIGENTOV *and* POTAPYCH

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Oh, oh, how disgusting! Don't come near me!

NEGLIGENTOV. I'm sent from uncle to thank you for your bounty.

LEONID. He says, mamma, that they taught him a good deal, only it was impossible for him to learn anything.

NEGLIGENTOV. Impossible; from my birth I had no aptitude for the sciences. I received from fifty to a hundred birch rods nearly every day, but they didn't quicken my understanding.

LEONID. Oh, mamma, how amusingly he tells about the way he learned! Here, just listen. Well, and how did you learn Latin?

NEGLIGENTOV. Turpissime!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. [*Shrugging her shoulders*] What in the world is that?

NEGLIGENTOV. Most abominably.

LEONID. No, wait a bit; and what did the teacher do with you?

NEGLIGENTOV. [*Bursts out laughing*] It made you laugh. Once, after a cruel torture, he commanded two students to fasten me by the neck with a belt, and to lead me through the market-place as a laughing-stock.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. How is it they took you into the civil service if you never learned anything?

NEGLIGENTOV. Through the mediation of influential people.

LEONID. And did they expel you from school?

NEGLIGENTOV. They didn't expel me; but they excluded me because I grew too much.

LEONID. Grew too much?

NEGLIGENTOV. Well, as I, during all this teaching and grilling, remaining in the lower grades, was getting on in years, and grew more than the other fellows of my class, of course I was excluded because I was too big. I suffered all the more from the venality of those at the head. Our rector liked gifts; and a week before the examinations, he sent us all to our parents for presents. According to the number of these presents, we were promoted to the higher classes.

LEONID. What was your conduct like?

NEGLIGENTOV. Reprehensible.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. What in the world! Good heavens! Go away, my dear sir, go away!

LEONID. Oh, mamma, he's comical; wait a bit before driving him out. Dance, Negligentov!

NEGLIGENTOV. [*Dances and sings*]

"I shall go, shall go to mow
Upon the meadow green."

GRISHA *bursts out laughing.*

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Stop, stop! [NEGLIGENTOV *ceases. To* GRISHA] What are you laughing at?

GRISHA. The member dances very comically.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. What do you mean, "member"?

GRISHA. Why, he himself tells us all that he is a member

in the court, not a copy-clerk. And so they call him the member.

NEGLIGENTOV. I call myself the member, although falsely, but expressly for the respect of the court menials, and in order to escape scoffing and insult.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Be gone, and don't you ever dare to show yourself to me!

NEGLIGENTOV. Uncle says that I fell into loose living because of my bachelor life, and that I may get mired in it unless you show me your favor.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. No, no, never!

NEGLIGENTOV. [*On his knees*] Uncle told me to beg you with tears, because I am a lost man, subject to many vices, and, without your favor, I shall not be tolerated in the civil service.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Tell your uncle that I shall always be your benefactress; but don't you even think about a wife! Be gone, be gone!

NEGLIGENTOV. I thank you for not deserting me! [*To* GRISHA] Ask the mistress to let you go to the fair, and catch up with me! [*He goes out.*

SCENE V

The same, except NEGLIGENTOV

MADAM ULANBEKOV. How easy it is to be mistaken in people! You take pains for them, work your head off, and they don't even feel it. I should have been glad to establish that boy in life, but he crawls into the house drunk. Now, if he's a prey to that weakness, he ought, at least, to try to hide it from me. Let him drink where he will, but don't let me see it! I should know, at least, that he respected

me. What clownishness! What impudence! Whom will he be afraid of, pray tell, if not of me?

LEONID. Oh, what a comical fellow! Don't be angry with me, mamma. When I found out that you wanted to marry Nadya to him, I felt sorry for her. And you're so good to everybody! [*He kisses her hand*] I didn't want you to do anything unjust.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Such people fairly drive you into sin. [*Kissing him*] You have a beautiful soul, my dear! [*To* VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA] Indeed, I have always thought that God himself sometimes speaks with the lips of babes. Liza! Go tell Nadezhda not to cry, that I have turned out Negligentov.

LIZA. Yes, ma'am. [*She goes out.*

GRISHA. [*Approaches, swaggering, and stops in a free and easy pose*] Mistress!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. What's the matter with you?

GRISHA. Let me go down-town; to-day's a holiday there.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. What do you want to go for? To stare at the drunkards?

GRISHA. [*Clasping his hands behind him*] Please, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. No, most certainly not!

GRISHA. Please do, mistress.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. I tell you, positively, no! One's morals are just spoiled at these fairs. Your greedy ears will take in all kinds of nastiness! You're still a boy; that's no place for you!

GRISHA. No, but please let me, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You stay right here! Put that nonsense out of your head!

GRISHA. Well, I declare! I slave, and slave, and can't ever go anywhere!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Oh me, oh my! Oh me, oh my! How spoiled you are! How spoiled you are!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. What are you cackling about? Keep still!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. But how can I keep still, benefactress? Such lack of feeling! Such ingratitude! It pierces the heart.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. I command you to keep still, and you must keep still!

GRISHA. Please let me, ma'am!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. As if the mistress didn't love you, as if she didn't fondle you, more, if anything, than her own son!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. [*Stamping her foot*] Shhh!....I'll turn you out!

GRISHA. I want awfully to go to the fair; please let me, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Well, go along then! but come back early!

GRISHA. Yes, ma'am.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Kiss the dear lady's hand, you blockhead!

GRISHA. What are you trying to teach me for? I know my own business. [*He kisses the mistress's hand and goes out.*

MADAM ULANBEKOV. As for you, my dear, if I ever hear anything like this again, I'll have them drive you off the place with brooms.

She goes out. VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA *remains standing in a stupor.*

SCENE VI

The same, except MADAM ULANBEKOV; *then* LIZA

LEONID. Well, you caught it, didn't you? And you deserved it, too!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. I'll have my turn yet.

LIZA *enters.*

LIZA. [*Quietly to* LEONID] Nadya sent me to say that we'll come to the garden.

LEONID. Give her a kiss from me.

GAVRILOVNA. God give you health, master, for taking our part. Any wretch can insult us; but there's no one to take our part. You'll get a rich reward for that in the next world.

LEONID. I'm always ready to help you.

[*He goes out to the right, with a caper.*

GAVRILOVNA. Thanks, my dear!

[*She goes out with* LIZA, *to the left.*

SCENE VII

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA *and* POTAPYCH

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Why don't you insult me? They all insult me, why don't you? You heard how she herself wanted to flog me; "I'll have them do it with brooms," she said. May her words choke her!

POTAPYCH. What, I!.... I insult anybody! But as to the gentlefolk there....I don't know, but perhaps they have to.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Do you see what's going on in this house! Do you see? Do you understand it, or don't you? Just now when I began to talk about Grisha, you

heard how she began to roar? You heard how she began to hiss?

POTAPYCH. What's that to me? I, by the mistress's kindness, in her employ. . . . I shall carry out all her orders. . . . What business is it of mine? I don't want to know anything that isn't my business.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. But did you see how Nadya and Liza—the hussies!—looked at me? Did you see how the snakes looked? Ha! I must look after them, I must! [POTAPYCH, *with a wave of his hand, goes out*] Bah! you! you old blockhead! What people! What people! There's no one to whom I can talk, and relieve my heart. [*She goes out.*

III

Part of the garden; to the rear, a pond, on the shore of which is a boat. Starry night. A choral song is heard in the far distance. For a while the stage is empty.

SCENE I

Enter NADYA *and* LIZA

LIZA. Oh, Nadya, what's this we're doing? When the mistress hears of this, it'll be your last day on earth.

NADYA. If you're afraid, take yourself home.

LIZA. No, I'll wait for you. But all the same, my girl, it's awful, no matter what you say! Lord preserve us when she finds it out.

NADYA. Always singing the same tune! If you fear the wolf, keep out of the woods.

LIZA. But what has happened to you? Before, you didn't talk like this. You used to hide yourself; and now you go to him of your own accord.

NADYA. Yes, before I ran away from him; now I don't want to. [*She stands musing*] Now I myself don't know what has suddenly happened within me! Just when the mistress said, a short while ago, that I shouldn't dare to argue, but marry the man she said to marry, just then my whole heart revolted. "Oh, Lord, what a life for me!" I thought. [*She weeps*] What's the use in my living purely, guarding myself not merely from every word, but even from every look? Even so, evil seized upon me. "Why," I thought, "should

I guard myself?" I don't want to! I don't want to! It was just as if my heart died within me. It seemed that if she said another word, I should die on the spot.

LIZA. What are you saying! Why, I really thought you were coming to the master as a joke.

NADYA. As a joke! I can't bear an insult! I cannot. [*Silence*] Oh, Liza, if life were better, I shouldn't have come into the garden at night. You know how it used to be, when I would think about myself—I suppose it must have come into your head, too—that here you are, an honest girl; you live like a bird, suddenly you're fascinated by some man, he makes love to you, comes to see you often, kisses you.... You're abashed before him, yet happy to see him. That's the way it always is. Although you may not be rich; although it may be you have to sit with your lover in the servants' room; yet it is as if you were a queen, just as if every day were a holiday for you. Then they marry you, and all congratulate you. Well, then, no matter how hard married life may be, perhaps there may be lots of work, in spite of that you live as if in paradise; just as if you were proud of something.

LIZA. Naturally, my girl.

NADYA. But when they say to you: "Pack off to this drunkard, and don't you dare argue, and don't you dare cry over yourself!".... Oh, Liza!.... And then you think how that horrid man will make fun of you, will bully you, show his authority, will begin to ruin your life, all for nothing! You grow old by his side without having a chance to live. [*She weeps*] It breaks your heart even to tell about it! [*Waving her hand*] And so, indeed, the young master is better.

LIZA. Oh, Nadya; it would be better if you hadn't spoken, and I hadn't listened!

NADYA. Stop, Liza! Why are you playing the prude with me? What would you do yourself if the master fell in love with you?

LIZA. [*Stammering*] Well, how should I know? Of course, what shall I say....the old Nick is strong.

NADYA. There you are!.... [*Silence*] Here is what I wanted to say to you, Liza. What a strange inspiration has come over me! When such thoughts came into my head, and, Liza, when I began to think about the master—then how dear he became to me!....so dear, that, really, I can't tell.... Before, when he ran after me, I didn't care; but now it's just as if something drew me to him.

LIZA. Oh, my girl! Just think of it; surely this is fate!

NADYA. And such a spirit came into me, I am afraid of nothing! I feel as if you could cut me to pieces, and still I'd not change my mind. And why this is so, I don't know. [*Silence*] I could hardly wait till night! It seems as if I could fly to him on wings! The one thing that I have in mind is that, at any rate, I am not a pretty girl for nothing; I shall have something by which to remember my youth. [*Musingly*] I thought to myself: "What a young man, how handsome! Am I, silly girl that I am, worth his loving me?" May I be choked here, in this lonely spot, if he does not.

LIZA. What's this, Nadya? You seem beside yourself.

NADYA. And I really am beside myself. While she spoiled me, caressed me, then I thought that I was a person like other people; and my thoughts about life were entirely different. But when she began to command me, like a doll; when I saw that I was to have no will of my own, and no protection, then, Liza, despair fell upon me. What became of my fear, of my shame—I don't know. "Only one day, but mine!" I thought; "then come what may, I don't care

to inquire. Marry me off to a herdsman, lock me in a castle with thirty locks!....it's all the same to me!"

LIZA. I think the master's coming.

LEONID *enters from the opposite side, in a cloak.*

NADYA. Well, Liza, isn't he handsome, ha?

LIZA. Oh, stop! You're either sick or half out of your head!

SCENE II

The same and LEONID

LEONID. [*Approaching*] I was thinking you would deceive me by not coming.

NADYA. Why did you think so?

LEONID. Well, you see, you said you didn't love me.

NADYA. No matter what girls say, don't you believe them. How could one help loving such a handsome fellow?

LEONID. [*Surprised*] Why, Nadya!

He takes her hand, for a short time holds it, then kisses it.

NADYA. [*In fright withdrawing her hand*] Oh! why did you do that? Dear, kind master! Aren't you ashamed?

LEONID. I love you ever so much, Nadya!

NADYA. You love me? Well, then, you might give me a kiss!

LEONID. May I, Nadya? Will you let me?

NADYA. What's the harm in it?

LEONID. [*Turning about*] Oh, and you, Liza, here....

LIZA. I'm going, I'm going....I shan't meddle.

LEONID. [*Confused*] I didn't mean that. Where did you get that idea?

LIZA. Oh, don't dodge. We know, too....

[*She goes out behind the shrubs.*

LEONID. And so you will let me kiss you? [*He kisses her timidly*] No, no, let me kiss your hand.

NADYA. [*Hides her hand*] No, no, how could you! What do you mean....

LEONID. Why not? I'll tell you what, you are the most precious thing on earth to me.

NADYA. Is that really so?

LEONID. You see, no one ever loved me before.

NADYA. Aren't you fooling?

LEONID. No, truly!.... Truly, no one has ever loved me. Honest to God....

NADYA. Don't swear; I believe you without it.

LEONID. Let's go sit down on the bench.

NADYA. Yes, let's. [*They sit down.*

LEONID. Why do you tremble so?

NADYA. Am I trembling?

LEONID. You are.

NADYA. Then, it must be that I feel a bit chilly.

LEONID. Just let me wrap you up.

He covers her with one side of his cloak, embracing her as he holds it around her. She takes his hand and holds it.

NADYA. And now let's sit this way and talk.

LEONID. What are we going to talk about? I shall say only one thing to you: I love you.

NADYA. You will say it, and I shall listen.

LEONID. You'll get tired of one and the same thing.

NADYA. Maybe you'll get tired of it; I never shall.

LEONID. Then let me speak. I love you, little Nadya.

[*He rises and kisses her.*

NADYA. Why do you do that? Just sit quietly, as we said we would.

LEONID. Shall we sit like this, with our hands folded?

NADYA. [*Laughing*] Like that. Hear, a nightingale is singing in the thicket. Sit down and listen. How nice it is to listen!

LEONID. Like this?

NADYA. Yes, as we sit together. It seems as if I could sit here all my life and listen. What could be better, what more could one want? ....

LEONID. Nadya, dear, that would really be a bore.

NADYA. What fellows you men are! You get sick of things in no time. But I, you see, am ready to sit out the whole night, to look at you, without lowering my eyes. It seems as if I should forget the whole world!

Tears start in her eyes, she bends her head, and then looks at LEONID *fixedly and musingly.*

LEONID. Now it would be nice to go rowing; it is warm, the moon is shining.

NADYA. [*Absently and almost mechanically*] What is it, sir?

LEONID. To go rowing; I should row you out to the little island. It is so pleasant there, on the island. Well, let's go. [*He takes her by the hand.*

NADYA. [*In a revery*] Where, sir?

LEONID. Where, where? I told you; didn't you hear me?

NADYA. Oh, forgive me, dearest master. I was thinking and didn't hear anything. Dearest master, forgive me!

[*She lays her head upon his shoulder.*

LEONID. I say, let's go to the island.

NADYA. [*Nestling up to him*] Oh, wherever you please! Even to the end of the world! If only with you.... Take me wherever you want.

LEONID. Nadya, you are so good, so sweet, that it seems as if I must burst out crying, just to look at you. [*They approach the boat*] Good-by, Liza.

LIZA. [*Coming from the bushes, she makes a warning gesture*]

Look out, you two! [LEONID *and* NADYA *sit down in the boat and move away*] There, they've gone! And I must wait here for them! This is awful, simply awful! At night, in the garden, and all alone, too! What a fix for me—afraid of everything, and.... [*She glances about her*] Heavens, this is deadly! If there were only somebody here, it would be all right, I'd have somebody to talk to. Holy Saints! Somebody's coming! [*She looks*] Oh, all right; just our old folks from the fair. [*She hides herself.*

SCENE III

Enter POTAPYCH *in an overcoat and a broad-brimmed hat, and with a cane, somewhat tipsy;* GAVRILOVNA *in an old-fashioned bonnet. They sit down on the bench.*

POTAPYCH. No, Gavrilovna, not that....don't say that!.... Our lady is so....such a kind mistress!.... Here, we asked if we could go to the fair, and she said to go along.... But what they say about her....that I don't know: it's not my business, and so I don't know anything about it.

GAVRILOVNA. Why *not* let us go, Potapych? You and I are not youngsters; we shan't be spoiled!

POTAPYCH. You can't let the young folks go, because you must have models for everything, Gavrilovna. Whatever models a person has in front of him, he may, very likely.... most probably....

GAVRILOVNA. Well, why did she let Grisha go? She said she wouldn't; well, and then she ought not to have done it.

POTAPYCH. Vasilisa Peregrinovna stirred me up a lot on Grisha's account a while ago....she stirred me up a lot,

but I don't know. It's not my business, so I don't know anything about it.

GAVRILOVNA. What's this you were saying about models? It would be better for her to show a better example herself! As it is, she only keeps shouting: "Watch, I tell you, watch the girls!" But what's the use of watching them? Are they all babies? Every person has his own brains in his head. Let every one think for himself. All you need to do is to look out for the five-year-olds, that they don't spoil something or other. What a life for a girl! There's nothing worse on earth! But the mistress doesn't want to consider whether a girl gets much fun out of life. Well, *does* she get much? Say!

POTAPYCH. [*Sighs*] A dog's life.

GAVRILOVNA. It surely is! Consequently one ought to pity them and not insult them at every step. As it is, it's simply awful! Nobody trusts them at all; it's just as if they weren't human beings. Just let a girl poke her nose out, and the guards are on the job!

POTAPYCH. But you can't....

GAVRILOVNA. Can't what? You can do everything. That'll do, Potapych! You're used to saying over other people's words like a magpie; but just think for yourself.

POTAPYCH. But I don't know....I don't know anything.

GAVRILOVNA. You won't gain anything through severity. You may tell 'em, if you please, that they'll be hung for such-and-such; they'll go and do it anyway. Where there's the greatest strictness, there's the most sin. You ought to reason like a human being. No matter if our masters pay money for their wits while we have only what we're born with, we have our own way of thinking, all the same. It's all right to lay down the law strictly; but don't always punish a fellow who makes a slip; let him off now and then. Some

bad comes from spoiling people; but now and then you can't help going wrong.

POTAPYCH. Now, if you ask me....what can I answer to that? How can I answer you?

GAVRILOVNA. Well, how?

POTAPYCH. Just this: I don't know anything about it, because it isn't my business....it's the mistress's business.

GAVRILOVNA. Bah, you old idiot! You've lost your wits in your old age.

POTAPYCH. Why should I....I, thanks to the lady's kindness, now in her employ....I carry out all her orders....but I don't know.

GAVRILOVNA. Well, let's go home. She may have thought up something or other about even you and me.

[*They go out.*

SCENE IV

LIZA. [*Enters*] Alone again! Where are those precious darlings of mine? I suppose they've forgotten about me! But, then, why should they remember me? Saints alive, it'll soon be daylight. This night is shorter than a sparrow's beak. How can we go home then? How brave that Nadya is!

Enter VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA.

SCENE V

LIZA *and* VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. What are you doing there, dearest?

LIZA. Can't you see? I'm taking a stroll.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. I see! How can I help it? But what kind of a night-walk is this?

LIZA. Well, when can we go walking? We work all day and wait on the gentry, and we go walking at night. But I am surprised at you! Don't you walk enough daytimes that you still want to wander around at night and scare people, just like....

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Just like what?.... Well, say it, say it!

LIZA. What? Oh, nothing.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. No, you said, "Just like".... well, say it now; just like who?

LIZA. I said what I said.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. No, don't you dare sneak out of it! Come, speak up!

LIZA. Why did you stick to it? All right, I'll tell you: like a spook.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. What, what! Like a spook!.... How do you dare, you dirty hussy, ha? What's this! You want to push me alive into the grave! But I'll find your lover here, and take you to the mistress. Then we'll see what song you'll sing.

LIZA. I haven't any lover! There's no use in your looking. Search the whole garden if you want to! And even if I had, it's none of your business! It's shameful for you even to speak of it. You ought not even to know about it: you're an old maid. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Sing on, sing on, my dear; you sing very finely on the wing; but you'll perch pretty soon! You're not going to roam about at night for nothing. I know your tricks. I'll show you all up! I'm so mad now, that even if you bow down to my feet, I'll not forgive you.

LIZA. Just wait! I see myself bowing before you! Don't count on it!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. No, now I'm going to look around every bush.

LIZA. Do it!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA *looks about on both sides, then approaches the pond.*

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Ha, what's this? Do tell, what tricks they're up to! In the boat! Hugging each other! How tender that is! Just like a picture! You ought to have thought to take a guitar along and sing love-songs!.... They're kissing each other! Very good! Delightful! Again! Excellent! What could be better? Phew, what an abomination! It's disgusting to look at! Well, my dears, you will remember me. *Now* I have nothing to say to you. *To-morrow* I shall! [*She goes out.*

LIZA. What devil brought her here? You can't clear up the mess now!

LEONID *and* NADYA *reach the shore and disembark from the boat.*

SCENE VI

LIZA, NADYA, *and* LEONID

LIZA. What have you done, what have you done!....

NADYA. [*Not listening to her, softly to* LEONID] You will come to-morrow?

LEONID. I will.

LIZA. What's the matter, don't you hear?

NADYA. If I can't come, I'll send a note somehow or other.

LEONID. Good!

NADYA. Well, good-by. [*They kiss.*

LIZA. [*Loudly*] Nadya!

NADYA. [*Goes up to* LIZA. LEONID *sits down upon the bench*] What's the matter?

LIZA. Vasilisa Peregrinovna saw you rowing on the pond.

NADYA. Well, deuce take her!

LIZA. My dear girl, don't carry your head too high!

LEONID. Nadya! [NADYA *goes to him*] Oh, Nadya, what a vile, good-for-nothing fellow I am!

NADYA. What do you mean?

LEONID. Little Nadya! [*He whispers in her ear.*

NADYA. [*Shakes her head*] Oh, my precious darling, why did that come into your head? I'm not sorry for this, but you are. How kind you are! Now, good-by! It's high time. I shouldn't leave you, but I can't help it; I'm not my own mistress.

LEONID. Good-by, then!

Slowly, as if unwillingly, they separate. NADYA *returns, overtakes* LEONID *and gazes into his eyes.*

NADYA. Do you love me?

LEONID. I do love you, indeed I do!

[*They kiss and go out in different directions.*

IV

Same room as in second picture

SCENE I[1]

POTAPYCH *is leaning against the door-jamb, his hand to his head.* VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA *enters quietly.*

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Result of yesterday evening, I suppose, my friend?

POTAPYCH. Wha-a-t?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Your head aches.

POTAPYCH. Did *you* put up the money?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. You haven't any money for anything else; but you have for such things.

POTAPYCH. Well, anyhow, it ain't your business.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Of course, Potapych, you're an old man, why shouldn't you take a drink once in a while?

POTAPYCH. Sure, I guess I work for it.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Just so, Potapych!

POTAPYCH. I'm tired of being lectured by you!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. I wish you well, Potapych.

POTAPYCH. No need for it! [*Silence*] But you keep upsetting the mistress so! If you'd only put in a word for us when she's in a good humor; but you just look for the wrong time, in order to complain of us.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. What do you say, Potapych? God preserve me!

POTAPYCH. What's that! No matter how much you

[1] The whole scene in a whisper.

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swear, I know you! For instance, why are you coming to the mistress now?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. To wish the benefactress good morning.

POTAPYCH. You'd better not come.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Why so?

POTAPYCH. It must be she got out the wrong side of bed; she's out of sorts. [VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA *rubs her hands with pleasure*] Here now, I see that you're happy; you're dying for some deviltry or other. Phew! Lord forgive us! What a disposition!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. You are saying insulting words to me, Potapych, insulting to my very heart. When did I ever say anything about you to the mistress?

POTAPYCH. If not about me, then about somebody else.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. But that's my business.

POTAPYCH. Your spite's always getting in its work.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Not spite, not spite, my friend! You're mistaken! I have just been so insulted that it's impossible to live in this world after it. I shall die, but I shall not forget.

MADAM ULANBEKOV *enters*. POTAPYCH *goes out*.

SCENE II

MADAM ULANBEKOV *and* VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. [*Kissing both of* MADAM ULANBEKOV'S *hands*] You have risen early, benefactress. You must have an awful lot of things on your mind.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. [*Sitting down*] I didn't sleep much. I had a bad dream.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. What, a dream, benefactress?

The dream may be terrible, but God is merciful. Not the dream, but what is going on in reality, disturbs you, benefactress. I see that; I've seen it a long time.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Bah, what is it to me what's going on?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Why, benefactress, don't we that your son, dear little soul! is struck with every creature he meets?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You make me tired.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. I'm so sorry for you, benefactress! Don't look for any consolation in this life! You scatter benefactions upon every one; but how do they repay you? The world is full of lust.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Go away!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. [*Weeping*] I can't keep back my tears when I look at you! My heart bleeds that they don't respect you, that they don't respect you even in your own house! In your honorable house, in such pious premises as these, to do such things!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. [*Frowning*] You silly crow! You want to croak about something or other. Well, croak away!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Benefactress, I'm afraid it might upset you.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You've upset me already. Talk!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. [*Glances about in all directions and sits down on a stool at the feet of* MADAM ULANBEKOV] Yesterday, benefactress, I was ending my evening prayer to the Heavenly Creator, and went out to stroll in the garden, and to occupy myself for the night with pious meditations.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Well!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. And what did I see there, benefactress! How my legs held me up, I don't know! That Liza of yours was running through the bushes with a de-

praved look; it must be she was seeking her lovers. Our master, the little angel! was rowing in the boat on the pond, and Nadya, also with a depraved expression, was clinging to him with her arms about his neck, and was kissing him. And it was easy to see that he, because of his purity, was trying to thrust her away; but she kept clasping him about the neck, kissing and tempting him.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Are you lying?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. You may quarter me, benefactress.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. It's enough if there is one grain of truth in your words.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. It's all true, benefactress.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Fiddlesticks! not all—it can't be! You always make up more than half. But where were the servants?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. All of them, benefactress, were more or less drunk. No sooner had you gone to bed, than they all went to the fair and got tipsy. Gavrilovna, Potapych, all were drunk. What an example to the young!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. This must be looked into thoroughly. Of course, I shouldn't have expected the least mischief of Leonid. Quiet lads like him! Well, if he'd been a soldier, it would be pardonable; but as it is.... [*She muses.*

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. And furthermore, benefactress, so far Grisha hasn't come back from the fair.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. How's that? He didn't sleep at home?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. He did not, benefactress!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You lie, you lie, you lie! I'll drive you off the place!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. May I die in my tracks!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. [*Sinking back in her chair*] You want

to kill me. [*Raising herself from the chair*] You simply want to kill me. [*She rings. Enter* POTAPYCH] Where's Grisha?

POTAPYCH. Just came, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Send him here! [POTAPYCH *goes out*] This certainly beats all!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. You'll not find anybody more devoted than I, benefactress; only I am unhappy in one respect: that my disposition displeases you.

Enter GRISHA, *his hair tousled and dishevelled.*

SCENE III

The same, and GRISHA

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Where've you been?

GRISHA. [*Now opens, now closes his eyes, not sure of his tongue, and unsteady on his legs*] At the fair, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Just come from it? [GRISHA *is silent*] Why don't you talk? [*Silence*] Am I going to get a word out of you, or not?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Answer the mistress.

GRISHA. What's that to you?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Answer me! Where have you been all this time?

GRISHA. I've done wrong, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. I'm not asking you whether you've done wrong or not; I'm asking you where you were!

GRISHA. [*Looks at the ceiling with a vacant stare*] Why, where should I be? The idea! The same place as usual!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Well, where's that?

GRISHA. I just informed you that I was there all the time, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. You'll drive me out of patience! Where's there?

GRISHA. But, really, ma'am! Your will in everything, ma'am. What did I, ma'am.... I've done wrong, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Good Lord! You're still drunk, I guess.

GRISHA. Not a bit, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Nonsense! I can see.

GRISHA. But, really, ma'am! One can say anything about a man.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Bah, you disgraceful scamp! He still denies it! This is awful! This is awful! Now, speak up, where've you been?

GRISHA. Why, really, ma'am! I just informed you, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Were you at the fair all night?

GRISHA. I just informed you so, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. How did you dare, when I let you go for only a short time?

GRISHA. Well, really, ma'am! I did want to go home, but they wouldn't let me, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Who wouldn't let you go?

GRISHA. My friends wouldn't, ma'am.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Who are these friends of yours?

GRISHA. Why, really, ma'am! Government office clerks.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Great heavens! Clerks! Do you understand what kind of people they are?

GRISHA. Who, ma'am, clerks? Understand what about them, ma'am?

MADAM ULANBEKOV. And you prowled about with them all night! It would have been better if you hadn't told me, nasty scamp that you are! I know how they act! They'll teach you all sorts of things! What does this mean? Begone! And don't you dare show yourself before my eyes!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Ask forgiveness, you blockhead! Kiss the dear lady's hand!

GRISHA *waves his hand impatiently and goes out.*

MADAM ULANBEKOV. What an affliction! It'll simply make me ill! Already I feel my spasms are beginning. What a worthless scamp! He went out just as if he had no responsibilities! And without a sign of repentance!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Ah, benefactress, you see he's still a child; he did it just out of stupidity.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. No, he needs a good....

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. What do you say, benefactress? He's still a regular booby! What can you expect of him! He'll get wiser, then it will be altogether different.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. What offends me most is ingratitude! It seems to me he ought to feel what I am doing for him. I'm positively sick. Go for the doctor!

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Calm yourself, benefactress; as if that rabble were worth your getting upset over!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Hand me the smelling-salts.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. [*Hands her them*] Snap your fingers at them, that's all. Now, if only those girls....

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Oh, here's another affliction! Now I certainly can't collect my thoughts; I'm completely distracted, and now she begins on the girls! I shall take to my bed at any moment.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Lust, benefactress, is beyond all endurance.

MADAM ULANBEKOV. No, they needn't expect any mercy from me. As it is, I forgive one, then another, and so the whole crowd is spoiled. [*She rings; enter* POTAPYCH] Call Nadezhda, and come here yourself! [POTAPYCH *goes out*] That's what it is to be a woman. If I were a man, would they dare be so wilful?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. They don't give a fig for you, benefactress, not a fig. They aren't a little bit afraid of you!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. They're going to find out pretty quick whether I amount to anything.

Enter POTAPYCH *and* NADYA. GAVRILOVNA *and* LIZA *look through the door.*

SCENE IV

The same, POTAPYCH *and* NADYA

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Nadezhda! Vasilisa Peregrinovna says she saw you in the garden last night with the master. Is that so? [NADYA *is silent*] You're silent, that means it's true. Well, now, you can thank yourself. I'm not a conniver at loose conduct, and I won't endure it in my house. I can't turn you out as a vagabond, that would weigh upon my conscience. I am obliged to marry you off. [*To* POTAPYCH] Send to town and tell Negligentov that I shall marry Nadya to him; and let the wedding be just as soon as possible. [*She rises from her chair and is about to leave.*

NADYA. [*Falling at her feet*] Whatever you wish, only not marriage with him!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Fiddlesticks! What I have once said is sacred. And what do you mean by this scene? Can't you see that I'm not well? To keep on plaguing me! Potapych! She has no father; you be a father to her instead; and impress upon her in fatherly fashion the baseness of her conduct, and the fact that she must obey my commands.

POTAPYCH. You listen, Nadezhda, to what the mistress commands! Because when she intrusts you to me, it means that I must show my authority over you. If you command

it, mistress, I can at once, in your presence, give her some moral instruction with my own hand! Here, if you dare to say one tiny word to the contrary, I'll drag you off by the hair, no matter what any one says.

[*He raises his hand threateningly.*

NADYA. Oh!.... [*She crouches.*

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Don't strike her! What disgusting scenes!

POTAPYCH. But, mistress! You can't get results by talking! Besides, if I'm her father, that's the regular thing! That's the law, and according to that, since she is rebelling against you now, I ought to give you that satisfaction.

NADYA. [*Weeping*] Mistress, don't ruin me!

MADAM ULANBEKOV. Oh, my God! You don't spare me at all. Tears, squabblings! Send for the doctor at once! How many times have I got to say it? It's your own fault, you've nobody to blame for your tears. Potapych! get this business over with! I don't like to repeat the same thing ten times over.

She goes out, GAVRILOVNA *after her. Silence.* GAVRILOVNA *returns.*

GAVRILOVNA. She's gone to bed, and banged the door behind her.

POTAPYCH. [*At the window*] Antoshka! Antoshka! Post boy! Saddle the horse and ride to town for the doctor. Oh, you! Lord!

NADYA. [*Rising from her knees*] Don't you think it's a sin for you to abuse me, Potapych? What have I ever done to you?

POTAPYCH. What do I care? What do I care about you? When the mistress really wants something, I have to try to please her in every way; because I was born her servant.

NADYA. If she had commanded you to kill me, would you have done it?

POTAPYCH. That's not my affair, I can't argue about that.

GAVRILOVNA. That's enough, Nadya, don't cry! God doesn't abandon orphans.

NADYA *falls upon* GAVRILOVNA'S *bosom.*

LIZA. [*To* VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA] Well, is your heart content now?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Wait, my dear, your turn will come.

LEONID *enters.*

SCENE V

The same and LEONID

LEONID. What's this? What has happened?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. You made all the trouble yourself, and then ask what has happened.

LEONID. What trouble did I make? What are you continually thinking up?

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Now, don't pretend! The whole truth has come out. You've been having a little fun. What of it? At your age, why shouldn't you have?

LIZA. She's reported the whole thing to the mistress. The mistress got so angry that it was awful! And now, sir, she is going to marry Nadya to that government clerk.

LEONID. Are you sure?

NADYA. The thing's settled, dearest master! I have to answer for last evening's sport.

LEONID. Is mamma very angry?

GAVRILOVNA. No one dares go near her.

LEONID. But how can that be? Isn't it possible to talk her over somehow or other?

GAVRILOVNA. Just go and try. No, she won't come out of her room now for five days; and she won't let any one at all see her there.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Do you want to talk your mamma over?

LEONID. Yes.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Do you want me to tell you how?

LEONID. Please be so kind, Vasilisa Peregrinovna.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Well, permit me. Our benefactress is very much hurt at Grisha, because he didn't spend the night at home: he came in drunk, and didn't even ask forgiveness nor kiss her hand. It was this vexation that made her sick. And then this Nadezhda happened to come her way when she was angry. Now our benefactress won't even come out of her room, and won't allow any one to go to her, so long as that stubborn Grisha doesn't beg forgiveness.

GAVRILOVNA. How contrarily everything happened! Grisha will keep up his character, too. Although he is a blockhead, he has some sense. Now he'll flop down on the hay and he'll lie there on his belly for four days.

POTAPYCH. Somebody ought to take Uncle Gerasim's club and dress him down from top to toe.

VASILISA PEREGRINOVNA. Now, our dear master, wouldn't you like to go present your compliments to him, in order that he might hurry up and ask your mamma's forgiveness?

LEONID. [*Upon reflection*] That would be too great an honor for him. But see here, Gavrilovna, is mamma actually very angry?

GAVRILOVNA. So angry, sir, that it's terrible!

LEONID. Well, what's to be done now!

NADYA. Why are you bothering? You see, there's nothing you can do: better leave me! Now you'll soon go away

to Petersburg; you will be happy: why should you think about such trifles, or disturb yourself?

LEONID. Why, you see, I'm sorry for you!

NADYA. Don't be sorry, if you please! I ran to my own destruction of my own free will, like a mad girl, without once stopping to think.

LEONID. What are you planning to do now?

NADYA. That's my business.

LEONID. But, you see, it's going to be very hard for you.

NADYA. What business is it of yours? It will be all the happier for you.

LEONID. But why do you talk like this?

NADYA. Because you're still a boy!.... Leave me!

LEONID. But, you see, he's such a drunken, vile fellow.

NADYA. Oh, my God! It would be better for you to go off somewhere: out of my sight.

LEONID. Yes, really, it would be better for me to spend a week with our neighbors.

NADYA. For God's sake, do!

LEONID. But Nadya, if it should be awfully hard for you to live with your husband, what then?

NADYA. [*Weeping*] Oh, leave me alone! Be good enough to leave me alone! [*Sobbing*] I beg only one thing of you: leave me, for God's sake! [*She sobs.*

GAVRILOVNA *and* LIZA. [*Motioning with their hands*] Go away! Go away!

LEONID. Why do you drive me out? I guess I'm sorry enough for her! I keep thinking somehow or other, that it may still be possible to help her in some way.

NADYA. [*With desperation*] I don't want any helpers or defenders! I don't want them! If my patience fails, that pond of ours isn't far off!

LEONID. [*Timidly*] Well, I'll go away if you wish....

Only what is she saying? You folks, look after her, please! Good-by! [*He goes to the door.*

NADYA. [*After him in a loud voice*] Good-by!

LEONID *goes out.*

LIZA. And so the old proverb is true: What's fun for the cat is tears for the mouse.

POVERTY IS NO CRIME

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

CHARACTERS

GORDÉY KÁRPYCH TORTSÓV, *a rich merchant.*

PELAGÉYA EGÓROVNA, *his wife.*

LYUBÓV GORDÉYEVNA, *his daughter.*

LYUBÍM KÁRPYCH TORTSÓV, *his brother, a man who has squandered his property.*

AFRIKÁN SÁVVICH KÓRSHUNOV,[1] *a manufacturer.*

MÍTYA, TORTSÓV'S *clerk.*

YÁSHA GÚSLIN, *nephew of* TORTSÓV.

GRÍSHA RAZLYULYÁYEV, *a young merchant, the son of a rich father.*

ANNA IVÁNOVNA, *a young widow.*

MÁSHA, LÍZA } *friends of* LYUBÓV TORTSÓV.

EGÓRUSHKA, *a boy, distant relative of* TORTSÓV.

ARÍNA, *nurse of* LYUBÓV GORDÉYEVNA.

GUESTS, SERVANTS, MUMMERS, AND OTHERS.

The action takes place in a district town in the house of the merchant TORTSOV *during the Christmas holidays.*

[1] Vulture

POVERTY IS NO CRIME

ACT I

A small office room; in the rear wall a door; in the corner on the left a bed, on the right a cupboard. In the left wall a window, and beside the window a table. Near the table a chair; near the right wall a desk and a wooden stool. Beside the bed a guitar; on the table and desk are books and papers.

SCENE I

MITYA *is walking back and forth in the room.* EGORUSHKA *is seated on the stool reading* "Bová Korolévich."

EGORUSHKA. [*Reads*] "My sovereign father, glorious and brave king, Kiribít Verzoúlovich, I do not possess the courage to marry him now. Because when I was young I was wooed by King Gvidón."

MITYA. Well, Egorushka, is any one at home?

EGORUSHKA. [*Putting his finger on the place where he is reading in order not to make a mistake*] Nobody; they've all gone driving. There's only Gordey Karpych at home. [*Reads*] "Whereupon Kiribit Verzoulovich said to his daughter"—[*Again marking the place*]—only he's in such a rage, it's awful! I cleared out—he keeps on cursing. [*Reads*] "Then the beautiful Militrísa Kirbítyevna called her servant Licharda to her."

MITYA. With whom was he angry?

EGORUSHKA. With my uncle, with Lyubim Karpych. On the second day of the holidays Uncle Lyubim Karpych dined

with us; at dinner he got drunk and began to play the fool; it was awfully funny. I always get the giggles. I couldn't stand it, and then I burst out laughing, and they were all looking at me. Uncle Gordey Karpych took it as a great insult to himself and very bad manners, and he was furious with him and turned him out. Uncle Lyubim Karpych made a great row, and out of revenge went and stood with the beggars by the church door. Uncle Gordey Karpych said: "He has put me to shame," he said, "in the eyes of the whole town." And now he gets angry with everybody who comes near him, no matter who they are. [*Reads*] "With the intention of advancing toward our town."

MITYA. [*Looking out of the window*] Here they come, I think. Yes, it's so. Pelageya Egorovna, Lyubov Gordeyevna, and guests with them.

EGORUSHKA. [*Concealing his story in his pocket*] I'll run up-stairs. [*Goes out.*

SCENE II

MITYA *alone*

MITYA. Oh, Lord, what misery! Everybody in the streets is having a holiday, and everybody in the houses too, and you have to sit between four walls! I am a stranger to all, no relations, no friends!—And then besides!—O well! I'd better get to work; perhaps this wretchedness will pass off. [*Seats himself at the desk and muses, then begins to sing.*

"Her beauty I cannot describe!
Dark eyebrows, with languishing eyes."

Yes, with languishing eyes. And yesterday when she came from mass, in her sable coat, and her little handkerchief on

her head, like this—ah!—I really think such beauty was never seen before! [*Muses, then sings.*

"Where, O where was this beauty born!"

My work all goes out of my head! I'm always thinking of her! My heart is tormented with sorrow. O misery most miserable!

Covers his face with his hands and sits silent. Enter PELAGEYA EGOROVNA, *dressed in winter clothes; she stops in the doorway.*

SCENE III

MITYA *and* PELAGEYA EGOROVNA

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Mitya, Mitya dear!

MITYA. What do you want?

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Come up to us later on in the evening, my dear, and play with the girls. We're going to sing songs.

MITYA. Thank you exceedingly, I shall make it my first duty.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Why are you always sitting alone in the office? It's not very cheerful! You'll come, won't you? Gordey Karpych won't be at home.

MITYA. Good, I shall come without fail.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. He's going off again, you see; he's going off there to that friend of his—what's his name?

MITYA. To Afrikan Savvich?

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, yes! He's quite gone on him! Lord forgive him!

MITYA. Take a seat, Pelageya Egorovna. [*Fetches a chair.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Oh, I have no time. Well, yes, I'll

sit down a bit. [*Sits down*] Now just think, what a misfortune! Really, they've become such friends that it beats everything! Yes, that's what it's come to! And why? What's the use of it all? Tell me that, pray. Isn't Afrikan Savvich a coarse, drunken fellow? Isn't he?

MITYA. Perhaps Gordey Karpych has some business with Afrikan Savvich.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. What sort of business! He has no business at all. You see Afrikan Savvich is always drinking with that Englishman. He has an Englishman as director of his factory, and they drink together! But he's no fit company for my husband. But can you reason with him? Just think how proud he is! He says to me: "There isn't a soul here to speak to; all," he says, "are rabble, all, you see, are just so many peasants, and they live like peasants. But that man, you see, is from Moscow—lives mostly in Moscow—and he's rich." And whatever has happened to him? Well, you see, it was all of a sudden, my dear boy, all of a sudden! He used to have so much sense. Well, we lived, of course not luxuriously, but all the same pretty fairly decently; and then last year he went for a trip, and he caught it from some one. He caught it, he caught it, they have told me so—caught all these tricks. Now he doesn't care for any of our Russian ways. He keeps harping on this: "I want to be up to date, I want to be in the fashion. Yes, yes! Put on a cap," he says! What an idea to get! Am I going to try to charm any one in my old age and make myself look lovely? Bah! You just try to do anything with him. He never drank before—really he didn't—but now he drinks with this Afrikan. It must be that drink has turned his brain [*points to her head*] and muddled him.... [*Silence*] I think now that the devil has got hold of him! Why can't he have some sense! If he were a young fellow!

For a young fellow to dress up and all that is all right; but you see he's nearly sixty, my dear, nearly sixty! Really! "Your fashionable up-to-date things," says I, "change every day; our Russian things have lived from time immemorial! The old folks weren't any stupider than we." But can you reason with him, my dear, with his violent character?

MITYA. What is there to say? He's a harsh man.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Lyubov is just at the right age now; we ought to be settling her, but he keeps dinning it in: "There's no one her equal, no! no!" But there is! But he says there isn't. How hard all this is for a mother's heart.

MITYA. Perhaps Gordey Karpych wishes to marry Lyubov Gordeyevna in Moscow.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Who knows what he has in his mind? He looks like a wild beast, and never says a word, as if I were not a mother. Yes, truly, I never say anything to him; I don't dare; all you can do is to speak with some outsider about your grief, and weep, and relieve your heart; that's all. [*Rises*] You'll come, Mitya?

MITYA. I'll come, ma'am.

GUSLIN *comes in.*

SCENE IV

The same and GUSLIN

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Here's another fine lad! Come up-stairs to us, Yasha, and sing songs with the girls; you're good at that; and bring along your guitar.

GUSLIN. Thank you, ma'am: I don't think of that as work; I must say it's a pleasure.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Well, good-by! I'm going to take a nap for half an hour.

GUSLIN *and* MITYA. Good-by.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA *goes out;* MITYA *seats himself dejectedly at the table;* GUSLIN *seats himself on the bed and takes up the guitar.*

SCENE V

MITYA *and* YASHA GUSLIN

GUSLIN. What a crowd there was at the fair! Your people were there. Why weren't you?

MITYA. Because I felt so awfully miserable.

GUSLIN. What's the matter? What are you unhappy about?

MITYA. How can I help being unhappy? Thoughts like these keep coming into my head: what sort of man am I in the world? My mother is old and poor now, and I must keep her—and how? My salary is small; I get nothing but abuse and insults from Gordey Karpych; he keeps reproaching me with my poverty, as if I were to blame—and he doesn't increase my salary. I'd look for another place, but where can one find one without friends? And, yes, I will confess to you that I won't go to another place.

GUSLIN. Why won't you go? There at the Razlyulyayevs' it's very nice—the people are rich and kind.

MITYA. No, Yasha, that doesn't suit me! I'll bear anything from Gordey Karpych, I'll stand poverty, but I won't go away. That's my destiny!

GUSLIN. Why so?

MITYA. [*Rises*] Well, I have a reason for this. It is,

Yasha, because I have another sorrow—but nobody knows about it. I haven't spoken to any one about my sorrow.

GUSLIN. Tell me about it.

MITYA. [*Waving his hand*] What for?

GUSLIN. Yes, tell me; don't put on airs!

MITYA. Whether I tell you or not, you can't help me!

GUSLIN. How do you know?

MITYA. [*Walking toward* GUSLIN] Nobody can help me —I am a lost man! I've fallen wildly in love with Lyubov Gordeyevna.

GUSLIN. What's the matter with you, Mitya? Whatever do you mean?

MITYA. Well, anyhow, it's a fact.

GUSLIN. You'd better put it out of your head, Mitya. Nothing can ever come of that, so there's no use thinking about it.

MITYA. Though I know all this, one cannot control one's heart. "To love is most easy, one cannot forget." [*He speaks with violent gestures*] "I love the beautiful girl more than family, more than race; but evil people forbid me, and they bid me cease."

GUSLIN. Yes, indeed; but you must stop it! Now Anna Ivanovna is my equal; she has no money, and I haven't a kopek—and even so uncle forbids me to marry. It's no use for you to think of doing so. You'll get it into your head and then it'll be still harder for you.

MITYA. [*Declaiming*] "What of all things is most cruel? The most cruel thing is love." [*Walking about the room.*] Yasha, have you read Koltsóv?

GUSLIN. Yes, why?

MITYA. How he describes all these feelings!

GUSLIN. He does describe them exactly.

MITYA. Exactly, to perfection. [*Walking about the room*] Yasha!

GUSLIN. What?

MITYA. I myself have composed a song.

GUSLIN. You?

MITYA. Yes.

GUSLIN. Let's make up a tune for it, and we'll sing it.

MITYA. Good! Here, take this [*gives him a paper*] and I'll write a little—I have some work: most likely Gordey Karpych will be asking me about it. [*Sits and writes.*

GUSLIN *takes the guitar and begins to pick out a tune.*

RAZLYULYAYEV *comes in with an accordion.*

SCENE VI

The same and RAZLYULYAYEV

RAZLYULYAYEV. Hello, boys!

[*Plays on the accordion and begins to dance.*

GUSLIN. What a fool! What did you buy that accordion for?

RAZLYULYAYEV. Why, I bought it to play on, of course —this way. [*Plays.*

GUSLIN. Well, that's fine music, I must say! Stop, I tell you!

RAZLYULYAYEV. What! Do you think I'll stop? I'll stop when I want to.—What airs! Haven't I got any money? [*Slapping his pocket*] It chinks! If we go on a spree—then it's some spree!

"One mountain is high,
And another is low;
One darling is far,
And another is near."

Mitya! [*Strikes* MITYA *on the shoulder*] Mitya, why are you sitting still?

MITYA. I have some work to do. [*Continues to work.*

RAZLYULYAYEV. Mitya! Say, Mitya, I'm on a spree, my boy! Really, I am. Oh, come on! [*Sings, "One mountain is high," etc.*] Mitya! Say, Mitya, I'm going on a spree for the whole holiday season—then I'll set to work, upon my word I will! Haven't I got any money? There it is! And I'm not drunk.—Oh, no, such a spree!—so jolly!

MITYA. Well, go on a spree as much as you like.

RAZLYULYAYEV. And after the holidays I shall marry!—Upon my word I shall marry! I'll get a rich girl.

GUSLIN. Now, then, listen; how does this sound?

RAZLYULYAYEV. Sing it, sing it! I'll listen.

GUSLIN. [*Sings*]

"Is naught so hard and evil
As to be fatherless;
Than slavery more grievous
And sharper than distress.

All in the world make holiday,
But lonely you must pine.
Your mind is wild and drunken,
But it came not from the wine.

Youth shall not do your pleasure,
Beauty no healing bear.
Your sweetheart does not comb your locks,
But your harsh stepdame, Care."

During all this time RAZLYULYAYEV *stands as if rooted to the ground, and listens with emotion; when the song is finished all are silent.*

RAZLYULYAYEV. Good! Very good! It's awfully sad;

it takes hold of one's heart. [*Sighs*] Ah, Yasha! play something cheerful; that's enough of this stuff—to-day's a holiday. [*Sings.*

"Who does not love a hussar!
Life without love would be sad!"

Play the tune, Yasha.

GUSLIN *plays the tune.*

MITYA. That's enough of your fooling. Come, now, let's sit down in a circle and sing in a low tone.

RAZLYULYAYEV. All right. [*They sit down.*

GUSLIN. [*Begins to sing;* MITYA *and* RAZLYULYAYEV *join in*]

"Now my young, my young lads,
You my friends...."

Enter GORDEY KARPYCH; *all stand up and stop singing.*

SCENE VII

The same and GORDEY KARPYCH

GORDEY KARPYCH. What's all this screeching! Bawling like so many peasants! [*To* MITYA] And you here! You're not living here in a peasant's hut! What a dram-shop! See that this sort of thing doesn't go on in the future! [*Goes to the table and inspects the papers*] Why are these papers all scattered about?

MITYA. I was looking over the accounts, sir.

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*Takes the book by Koltsóv, and the copy-book with verses*] And this, too, what's this rubbish?

MITYA. I was copying these poems of Koltsóv's to pass the time away, since it's a holiday.

GORDEY KARPYCH. You are sentimental for a poor lad!

MITYA. I just study for my own education, in order to understand things.

GORDEY KARPYCH. Education! Do you know what education is?—And yet you keep on talking! You ought to get yourself a new coat! For when you come up-stairs to us and there are guests, it's a disgrace! What do you do with your money?

MITYA. I send it to my mother because she is old and has nowhere to get any.

GORDEY KARPYCH. Send it to your mother! You ought to educate yourself first; God knows what your mother needs! She wasn't brought up in luxury; most likely she used to look after the cows herself.

MITYA. It's better that I should suffer than that my mother should be in any want at all.

GORDEY KARPYCH. This is simply disgusting! If you don't know yourself how to observe decency, then sit in your hovel! If you haven't anything to wear, then don't have any fancies! You write verses, you wish to educate yourself—and you go about looking like a factory hand! Does education consist in this, in singing idiotic songs? You idiot! [*Through his teeth and looking askance at* MITYA] Fool! [*Is silent*] Don't you dare to show yourself in that suit up-stairs. Listen, I tell you! [*To* RAZLYULYAYEV] And you too! Your father, to all appearances, rakes up money with a shovel, and you go about in this Russian smock.

RAZLYULYAYEV. What do you say! It's new—French goods—I ordered it from Moscow—from an acquaintance—twenty rubles a yard! Do you think I ought to go about in a bob-tailed coat, like Franz Fédorych at the apothecary's! Why, they all tease him there!—the deuce of a coat! What's the use of making people laugh!

GORDEY KARPYCH. Much you know! It's hopeless to expect anything of you! You yourself are an idiot, and your father hasn't much more sense—he always goes about in dirty old clothes. You live like ignorant fools, and like fools you will die.

RAZLYULYAYEV. That's enough!

GORDEY KARPYCH. What?

RAZLYULYAYEV. That's enough, I say!

GORDEY KARPYCH. Clown! You don't even know how to talk straight! It's simply waste of words to speak to you—like shooting peas against a wall—to waste words on such as you, fools! [*Goes out.*

SCENE VIII

The same without TORTSOV

RAZLYULYAYEV. Just look! How savage! What a rage he's in! Oh, we're awfully scared of you—you bet we are!

MITYA. [*To* GUSLIN] There, that's the sort of life I lead! That's the sort of thing I have to put up with!

RAZLYULYAYEV. It'll drive you to drink—upon my word, it'll drive you to drink! But you'd better stop thinking about it. [*Sings.*

"One mountain is high,
And another is low;
One darling is far,
And another is near."

Enter LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, ANNA IVANOVNA, MASHA, *and* LIZA.

SCENE IX

The same and LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, ANNA IVANOVNA, MASHA, *and* LIZA.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Peace, honest company!

RAZLYULYAYEV. I welcome you to our shanty.

MITYA. Our respects! Please come in! What good wind brings you here?

ANNA IVANOVNA. No wind—we just took it into our heads and came. Gordey Karpych has gone out, and Pelageya Egorovna has gone to lie down, so now we are free! Be as jolly as you please!

MITYA. I humbly beg you to sit down.

They sit down; MITYA *seats himself opposite* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA; RAZLYULYAYEV *walks about.*

ANNA IVANOVNA. It grew dull sitting silent cracking nuts. "Come on, girls," said I, "and see the boys," and that suited the girls.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. What stories you do make up! We never thought of coming here—that was your idea.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Much you didn't! You were the first! Everybody knows, if a person wants a thing, then he thinks about it; the boys of the girls, and the girls of the boys.

RAZLYULYAYEV. Ha, ha, ha! Anna Ivanovna, you have said it exactly.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Not a bit of it!

MASHA. [*To* LIZA] Oh, how embarrassing!

LIZA. Anna Ivanovna, you are just saying what isn't true.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Oh, you modest thing! I'd like to say a word—but it wouldn't be nice before the boys!—I've been a girl myself. I know all about it.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. There are girls and girls!

MASHA. Oh, how embarrassing!

LIZA. What you say sounds very strange to us, and, I must say, it's disconcerting.

RAZLYULYAYEV. Ha, ha, ha!

ANNA IVANOVNA. What were we talking about just now up-stairs? Do you want me to tell? Shall I tell them? Well, have you calmed down now?

RAZLYULYAYEV. Ha, ha, ha!

ANNA IVANOVNA. What are *you* opening your mouth for? It wasn't about you—don't you worry.

RAZLYULYAYEV. Even if it wasn't about me, still it may be there is some one who thinks about me. I know what I know! [*Dances to a tune.*

"Who does not love a hussar!
Life without love would be sad!"

ANNA IVANOVNA. [*Walking towards* GUSLIN] Well, guitar player, when will you marry me?

GUSLIN. [*Playing on the guitar*] When I can get permission from Gordey Karpych. What's the use of hurrying! It isn't raining on us! [*Nods his head*] Come along here, Anna Ivanovna; I've got something to say to you.

She goes to him, and sits near him; he whispers in her ear, looking towards LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *and* MITYA.

ANNA IVANOVNA. What do you say!—Really?

GUSLIN. It's really true.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Well, then, all right; keep quiet!

[*They talk in a whisper.*

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. You, Mitya, will you come to us later on in the evening?

MITYA. I will.

RAZLYULYAYEV. And I'm coming; I'm good at dancing. [*Stands with arms akimbo*] Girls! do fall in love with me, one of you!

MASHA. You ought to be ashamed of yourself! What's that you're saying?

RAZLYULYAYEV. Why such airs! I say, fall in love with me, somebody—yes—for my simplicity.

LIZA. People don't talk like that to girls. You ought to wait till they do fall in love with you.

RAZLYULYAYEV. Yes, much I'll get from you by waiting! [*Dances.*

"Who does not love a hussar!"

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Looking at* MITYA] It may be somebody loves somebody and won't tell! He must guess himself.

LIZA. How can any girl in the world say that!

MASHA. I know it!

ANNA IVANOVNA. [*Goes up to them and looks now at* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *and now at* MITYA *and sings:*

"Already it is seen
If somebody loves somebody—
Opposite the beloved one she seats herself
Heavily sighing."

MITYA. Who does that apply to?

ANNA IVANOVNA. We know to whom.

RAZLYULYAYEV. Stay, girls, I'll sing you a song.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Sing, sing!

RAZLYULYAYEV. [*Sings slowly*]

"A bear was flying through the sky."

ANNA IVANOVNA. Don't you know anything worse than that!

LIZA. We might think you were making fun of us.

RAZLYULYAYEV. If this isn't good enough I'll sing you another, for I'm a jolly fellow. [*Sings.*

"Beat! Beat! upon the board.
Moscow! Moscow! that's the word.
Moscow's got it in his head
That Kolomna he will wed.
Tula laughs with all his heart.
But with the dowry will not part.
Buckwheat is tuppence. It's twenty for oats.
Millet is sixpence and barley three groats.
[*Turns towards the girls.*
If only oats would but come down!
It's costly carting 'em to town."

See! What weather!

MASHA. This doesn't concern us.

LIZA. We don't trade in flour.

ANNA IVANOVNA. What are you interrupting for! Just guess this riddle. What's this: round—but not a girl; with a tail—but not a mouse? [1]

RAZLYULYAYEV. That's a hard one!

ANNA IVANOVNA. Indeed it is!—You just think it over! Now, girls, come along! [*The girls rise and get ready to go*] Come along, boys!

GUSLIN *and* RAZLYULYAYEV *get ready.*

MITYA. But I'll come later. I'll put things to rights here first.

ANNA IVANOVNA. [*Sings while they are getting ready*]

"Our maids last night,
Our pretties last night,

[1] A turnip.

They brewed us a brew of the beer last night.
And there came to our maids,
And there came to our pretties
A guest, a guest whom they didn't invite."

ANNA IVANOVNA *lets them all pass through the door, except* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA; *she shuts the door and does not allow her to pass.*

SCENE X

MITYA *and* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*At the door*] Stop, don't be silly! [*Through the door the girls are heard laughing*] They won't let me out! Oh, what girls! [*Walks away from the door*] They're always up to something.

MITYA. [*Hands her a chair*] Be seated, Lyubov Gordeyevna, and talk to me for just a moment. I'm very glad to see you in my room.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Why are you glad? I don't understand.

MITYA. Oh, why!—It is very pleasant for me to see on your side such consideration; it is above my deserts to receive it from you. This is the second time I have had the good fortune——

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. There's nothing in that! I came here, sat awhile, and went away again. That means nothing. Maybe I'll go away again at once.

MITYA. Oh, no! Don't go!—Why should you! [*Takes the paper out of his pocket*] Permit me to present to you my work, the best I can do—from my heart.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. What is this?

MITYA. I made these verses just for you.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Trying to hide her joy*] Still, it may be just some sort of foolishness—not worth reading.

MITYA. That I cannot judge, because I wrote it myself, and without studying besides.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Read it.

MITYA. Directly.

Seats himself at the table, and takes the paper: LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *approaches very near to him.*

"In the meadow no grasses wither,
And never a flower doth fade;
However a fair lad fadeth
That once was a lusty blade.

He loved a handsome damsel;
For that his grief is great,
And heavy his misfortune,
For she came of high estate.

The lad's heart is breaking,
But vain his grief must be,
Because he loved a damsel
Above his own degree.

When all the night is darkened
The sun may not appear;
And so the pretty maiden,
She may not be his dear."

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Sitting and reflecting for some time*] Give it here. [*Takes the paper and hides it, then rises*] Now I will write something for you.

MITYA. You!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Only I don't know how to do it in verse, but—just plain Russian.

MITYA. I shall regard such a kindness from you as a great happiness to myself. [*Gives her paper and pen*] Here they are.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. It's a great pity that I write so abominably. [*She writes;* MITYA *tries to look*] Only don't you look, or I'll stop writing and tear it up.

MITYA. I won't look. But kindly condescend to permit me to reply, in so far as I am able, and to write some verses for you on a second occasion.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Laying down the pen*] Write if you wish—only I've inked all my fingers; if I'd only known, I'd better not have written.

MITYA. May I have it?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Well, take it; only don't dare to read it while I'm here, but after, when I've gone.

Folds together the paper and gives it to him; he conceals it in his pocket.

MITYA. It shall be as you wish.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Rises*] Will you come up-stairs to us?

MITYA. I will—this minute.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Good-by.

MITYA. To our pleasant meeting!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *goes to the door; from the doorway* LYUBIM KARPYCH *comes in.*

SCENE XI

The same and LYUBIM KARPYCH

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Ah!

LYUBIM KARPYCH. [*Looking at* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA] Wait! What sort of a creature is this? On what pretext? On what business? We must consider this matter.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Is it you, uncle!

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Oh, it's I, niece! What? You got a fright? Clear out, never mind! I'm not the man to tell tales. I'll put it in a box, and think it over after, all in my spare time.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Good-by. [*Goes out.*

SCENE XII

MITYA *and* LYUBIM KARPYCH

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Mitya, receive unto thyself Lyubim Karpych Tortsov, the brother of a wealthy merchant.

MITYA. You are welcome.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. [*Sits down*] My brother turned me out! And in the street, in a coat like this—one has to dance about a bit! The frost—at Christmas time—brrr!— My hands are frozen, and my feet nipped—brrr!

MITYA. Warm yourself up, Lyubim Karpych.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. You will not drive me away, Mitya? If you do, I'll freeze in the yard—I'll freeze like a dog.

MITYA. How could I? What are you saying?

LYUBIM KARPYCH. You see, Mitya, my brother turned me out. As long as I had a little money, I strolled about in warm places; now I have no money, and they won't let me come in anywhere. All I had was two francs and some-odd centimes! Not a great capital! It wouldn't build a stone house! It wouldn't buy a village! What could one do with such a capital? Where put it? Not take it to a bank! So then I took this capital and drank it up!—squandered it!— That's the way of it!

MITYA. Why do you drink, Lyubim Karpych? That makes you your own enemy.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Why do I drink? From stupidity! Yes, from my own stupidity. Why did you think I drank?

MITYA. You'd better stop it.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. It's impossible to stop; I've got started on this track.

MITYA. What track?

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Ah, well, listen—you're a kind soul—what this track was. Only you listen, take note of it. I was left when my father died, just a kid, tall as a bean pole, a little fool of twenty. The wind whistled through my head like an empty garret! My brother and I divided up things: he took the factory himself, and gave me my share in money, drafts and promissory notes. Well, now, how he divided with me is not our business—God be his judge! Well, then I went to Moscow to get money on the drafts. I had to go! One must see people and show oneself, and learn good manners. Then again, I was such a handsome young man, and I'd never seen the world, or spent the night in a private house. I felt I must try everything! First thing, I got myself dressed like a dandy. "Know our people!" says I. That is, I played the fool to a rarity! Of course, I started to visit all the taverns: "*Schpeelen sie polka!* Give us a bottle off the ice!" I got together enough friends to fill a pond! I went to the theatres——

MITYA. Well, Lyubim Karpych, it must be very nice in the theatre.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. I kept going to see the tragedies; I liked them very much, only I didn't see anything decently, and I didn't understand anything because I was nearly always drunk. [*Rises*] "Drink beneath the dagger of Prokóp Lyapunóv." [*Sits down*] By this sort of life I soon squandered all my money; what was left I intrusted to my friend Afrikan Korshunov, on his oath and word of honor; with him I had

drunk and gone on sprees, he was responsible for all my folly, he was the chief mixer of the mash! He fooled me and showed me up, and I was stuck like a crab on a sand bank. I had nothing to drink, and I was thirsty—what was to be done? Where could I go to drown my misery? I sold my clothes, all my fashionable things; got pay in bank-notes, and changed them for silver, the silver for copper, and then everything went and all was over.

MITYA. How did you live, Lyubim Karpych?

LYUBIM KARPYCH. How did I live? May God never give such a life to a Tatar! I lived in roomy lodgings, between heaven and earth, with no walls and no ceiling. I was ashamed to see people. I hid from the world; and yet you have to go out into God's world, for you have nothing to eat. You go along the street, and everybody looks at you. — Every one had seen what a life I used to lead, how I rattled through the town in a first-class cab, and now went about tattered and torn and unshaven. They shook their heads and away they went. Shame, shame, shame! [*Sits and hangs his head*] There is a good business—a trade which pays—to steal. But this business didn't suit me—I had a conscience, and again I was afraid: no one approves of this business.

MITYA. That's a last resort.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. They say in other countries they pay you thalers and thalers for this, but in our country good people punch your head for it. No, my boy, to steal is abominable! That's an old trick, we'll have to give it up! But, you see, hunger isn't a kind old aunty, and you have to do something! I began to go about the town as a buffoon, to get money, a kopek at a time, to make a fool of myself, to tell funny stories, and play all sorts of tricks. Often you shiver from early morn till night in the town streets; you

hide somewhere behind the corner away from people, and wait for merchants. When one comes—especially if he is rather rich—you jump out and do some trick, and one gives you five kopeks, and another ten: with that you take breath for a day and so exist.

MITYA. It would have been better, Lyubim Karpych, to go to your brother, than to live like that.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. It was impossible; I'd been drawn in. Oh, Mitya, you get into this groove, and it isn't easy to get out again. Don't interrupt! You'll have a chance later. Well, then, listen! I caught cold in the town—it was winter; I stood in the cold, smartly dressed, in this coat! I was blowing on my fingers and jumping from foot to foot. Good people carried me to the hospital. When I began to get better and come to my senses, my drunken spell was over. Dread came over me! Horror seized me! How had I lived? What had I done? I began to feel melancholy; yes, such melancholy that it seemed better to die. And so I decided that when I got quite well, I would go on a pilgrimage, then go to my brother, and let him take me as a porter. This I did. I threw myself plump at his feet! "Be a father to me!" says I, "I have lived abominably—now I wish to reform." And do you know how my brother received me! He was ashamed, you see, that he had such a brother. "But you help me out," I said to him, "correct me, be kind to me, and I will be a man." "Not at all," says he, "where can I put you when important guests, rich merchants, and gentry come to see me? You'll be the death of me," says he! "With my feelings and intellect," says he, "I ought not to have been born in this family at all. See how I live," says he; "who'd ever guess that our father was a peasant! For me," says he, "this disgrace is enough, and then you must come and obtrude yourself again." He over-

whelmed me as with thunder! After these words I went from bad to worse. "Oh, well," I thought, "deuce take him! He is very thick here. [*Points to his forehead*] He needs a lesson, the fool. Riches are no use to fools like us; they spoil us. You need to know how to manage money." [*Dozes off*] Mitya, I'll lie down here; I want to take a nap.

MITYA. Do lie down, Lyubim Karpych.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Mitya, don't give me any money—that is, don't give me much; just give me a little. I'll take a nap here, and then go and warm myself a little, you understand! I only need a little—no, no! Don't be foolish!

MITYA. [*Taking out money*] Here, take as much as you need.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. I need ten kopeks. This is all silver; I don't need silver. Give me two kopeks more, that will be just right. [MITYA *gives them*] That's enough. You have a good heart, Mitya! [*Lies down*] My brother doesn't know how to appreciate you. Yes, I'll play a joke on him! For fools riches are an evil! Give money to a sensible man, and he'll do something with it. I walked about Moscow, I saw everything, everything!—I've been through a long course of study! You'd better not give money to a fool; he'll only go smash! Foh, foh, foh, brr! just like brother and like me, the brute! [*In a voice half asleep*] Mitya, I will come and spend the night with you.

MITYA. Come on. The office is empty now—it's a holiday.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Oh, but I'll play a funny joke on brother. [*Falls asleep.*

MITYA. [*Walks towards the door and takes the letter out of his pocket*] What can she have written? I'm frightened!—My hands tremble!—Well, what is to be will be! I'll read it. [*Reads*] "And I love you. Lyubov Tortsov."

[*Clutches his head and runs out.*

ACT II

Guest-room in the house of TORTSOV. *Against the rear wall a sofa, in front of the sofa a round table and six armchairs, three on each side; in the left corner a door; on each wall a mirror, and under them little tables. A door in each side wall, and a door in the rear wall in the corner. On the stage it is dark; from the left door comes a light.*

SCENE I

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *and* ANNA IVANOVNA *enter through the lighted door.*

ANNA IVANOVNA. Why don't they come, our fine lads? Shall we go and fetch them?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. No, you'd better not. Well, yes, if you like, fetch them. [*Embraces her*] Fetch them, Annushka.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Well, evidently you aren't happy without him!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Oh, Annushka, if you only knew how I love him!

ANNA IVANOVNA. Love him, then, my dear, but don't lose your wits. Don't let him go too far, or you may be sorry for it. Be sure you find out first what sort of a fellow he is.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. He's a good lad!—I love him very much; he's so quiet, and he's an orphan.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Well, if he's good, then love him; you ought to know best. I just said that! Many a girl comes to grief because of them. It's easy to get into trouble, if you don't use your sense.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. What is our love? Like a blade of grass in the field; it blooms out of season—and it fades.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Wait a moment! Some one's coming, I think. Isn't it he? I'll go and you wait, perhaps it's he! Have a good talk with him. [*She goes out.*

MITYA *enters.*

SCENE II

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *and* MITYA

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Who's there?

MITYA. It's I, Mitya.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Why were you so long in coming?

MITYA. I was detained. [*Approaches*] Lyubov Gordeyevna, are you alone?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Yes, what of it?

MITYA. Lyubov Gordeyevna, how do you wish me to understand your letter? Do you mean it, or is it a joke? [LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *is silent*] Tell me, Lyubov Gordeyevna! I am now in such perplexity that I cannot express it to you. My position in your house is known to you; subordinate to everybody, and I may say utterly despised by Gordey Karpych. I've had only one feeling, that for you, and if I receive ridicule from you, then it would have been better for me never to have lived in this world. You may trust me! I am telling you the truth.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. No, Mitya dear, what I wrote to you was the truth, and not a joke. And you, do you love me?

MITYA. Indeed, Lyubov Gordeyevna, I do not know how to express to you what I feel. But at least let me assure you that I have a heart in my breast, and not a stone. You can see my love from everything.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. But I thought that you loved Anna Ivanovna.

MITYA. That is not true!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Really, they told me so.

MITYA. If this were true, then what sort of a man should I be after acting as I have? Could I declare with words what my heart does not feel! I think such a thing would be dishonorable! I may not be worth your regard, but I'm not the man to deceive you.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. It is impossible to believe you men; all men in the world are deceivers.

MITYA. Let them be deceivers, but I am not.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. How can one know! Perhaps you also are deceiving me and want to play a joke on me!

MITYA. It would be easier for me to die in this place than to hear such words from you! [*Turns away.*

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. No, Mitya, I didn't mean it. I know that you love me. I only wanted to tease you. [MITYA *is silent*] Mitya dear! Mitya! Why are you silent? Are you angry with me? I tell you I was only joking! Mitya! Yes! Now, then, say something. [*Takes his hand.*

MITYA. Oh, Lyubov Gordeyevna, I'm not in a joking humor! I'm not that sort of man.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Don't be angry.

MITYA. If you love me, then stop these jokes! They are not in place. Oh, it's all the same to me now! [*Embraces her*] Maybe they can take you from me by force, but I won't give you up of my free will. I love you more than my life!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Returning his embrace*] Mitya dear, what shall we do now?

MITYA. What shall we do? We didn't fall in love with each other just to say good-by!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Well, but what if they promise me to some one else?

MITYA. Look here, Lyubov, one word! To-morrow we must go together to Gordey Karpych, and throw ourselves at his feet. We'll say so and so—whatever you please, but we can't live without each other. Yes, if you love me, then forget your pride!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. What pride, Mitya? Is this a time for pride! Mitya dear, don't be angry with me; don't remember my past words. It was only girlish foolishness; I'm sorry that I did it! I shouldn't have joked with you; I should have caressed you, my poor boy. [*Throws her arms round his neck*] Oh, but, if father doesn't consent to our happiness—what then?

MITYA. Who can tell beforehand? It will be as God wills. I don't know how it is with you, but for me life is not life without you! [*Is silent.*

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Some one's coming! Go away quietly, dearest, and I'll come later.

MITYA *goes out quietly.* ARINA *comes in with a candle;* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *goes to meet her.*

SCENE III

ARINA, LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, *and afterwards* EGORUSHKA

ARINA. Well, you! You frightened me enough! What are you doing here? Your mother is looking for you there, and here you are! Why are you wandering about in the dark! Oh, you modest maiden! Fairy princess. [LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *goes out*] Well, really, wasn't some one there with her? [*Looks into the corner*] But I'm a silly old woman, I suspected some one! [*Lights the candles*] Oh, deary me, some

trouble will be sure to come in my old age. [EGORUSHKA *enters*] Go along, Egorushka, and call the girls in from the neighbors; tell them Pelageya Egorovna told you to invite them to come and sing songs.

EGORUSHKA. Oh! how are you, Arina, my dear?

ARINA. What are you so happy about, silly?

EGORUSHKA. Why shouldn't I be happy? It's such fun! Ha, ha, ha! [*Jumps about.*

ARINA. And maybe the mummers are coming; the young people wanted to dress up.

EGORUSHKA. Oh, I shall die! Oh, Lord, I shall die!

ARINA. What's the matter with you, you scamp?

EGORUSHKA. Oh, I shall die of laughing! Oh, granny, I've got such giggles!

ARINA. Dress up yourself.

EGORUSHKA. I will, I will! Oh, Lord! Oh, Oh, Oh.

ARINA. Now you run along quickly and fetch the girls.

EGORUSHKA. In a second! [*Goes out.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA *comes in.*

SCENE IV

ARINA *and* PELAGEYA EGOROVNA

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Arinushka, did you send for the girls?

ARINA. I did, my dear.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. That's right. Let them have a song with our folks, and cheer up Lyubov and the guests. This is the time for them to enjoy themselves—while they're young. You know what a girl's life is—behind bolts and bars, never seeing the world! Now's their holiday!—Yes, let 'em have a good time!

ARINA. Yes, to be sure, to be sure! Why shouldn't they?

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Bring in some Madeira, Arinushka, the oldest we have; and gingerbread for the young people, and sweets—whatever you choose! Attend to it yourself, but don't forget the Madeira.

ARINA. I understand, I understand; there'll be enough of everything. Directly, my dear, directly!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. And a snack for the young men.

ARINA. Everything, everything will be all right. Don't you worry yourself; you join the guests. I'll do everything with pleasure. [*Goes out.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. [*Going to the door*] Girls, boys, come here! There's more room here and it's lighter.

Enter LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, MASHA, LIZA, ANNA IVANOVNA, RAZLYULYAYEV, MITYA, GUSLIN, *and two* GUESTS.

SCENE V

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA, LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, MASHA, LIZA, ANNA IVANOVNA, RAZLYULYAYEV, MITYA, GUSLIN, *and two* GUESTS (*old women*).

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. [*To the old women*] We'll sit here. [*Seats herself on the sofa, with the old women near her;* ANNA IVANOVNA *and* GUSLIN *take chairs and talk quietly;* MITYA *stands near them;* MASHA, LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, *and* LIZA *walk about the room with their arms round each other;* RAZLYULYAYEV *follows them*] We'll watch them while they play.

LIZA. "Just imagine, mother!" I said, "he doesn't know how to talk properly, and he even uses such words that it's absolutely impolite."

RAZLYULYAYEV. Do you mean me?

LIZA. We aren't talking about you; it's no business of yours. [*She continues*] "But why, mother, must I love him?" [*Speaks in a whisper.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, my friend, I love the good old ways. Yes, our good old Russian ways. But there! my husband doesn't care for them! What can you do about it? That's his character. But I love them, I'm naturally jolly; yes, I love to give a person a bite and to get them to sing songs to me! Yes, I take after my family. Our family are all jolly, and love singing.

FIRST GUEST. When I look round, my dear Pelageya Egorovna, there isn't the gayety that there used to be when we were young.

SECOND GUEST. No, no.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. In my young days I was the merriest sort of girl—always singing and dancing—indeed I was. Yes, what songs I knew! They don't sing such songs now.

FIRST GUEST. No, they don't sing them; new songs have come in now.

SECOND GUEST. Yes, yes, one remembers the old times.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yasha dear! Sing us some good old songs.

GUSLIN *takes the guitar.*

RAZLYULYAYEV. [*To the girls*] So it's no use for me to wait; evidently I shan't get any sense out of you.

LIZA. What do you mean by sense? I don't understand.

MASHA. It's ridiculous to listen to you.

RAZLYULYAYEV. Yes, it's funny for you; but how is it for me? Really, why don't you love me?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Let's sit down.

They sit down.

GUSLIN. [*Sings*]

"Four huts beside the brook
That swift doth run.
There is a gossip
In every one.

Dear gossips all four,
My friends that be,
Be friendly and kindly
And nice to me.

When you're in the green garden,
Take me with you;
When you pluck flowers,
Pluck me a few.

When you weave garlands,
Weave me some too;
When you go to the river,
Take me with you.

When you throw in the garlands,
Throw also my wreath;
The others will float,
When mine sinks beneath.

All of the sweethearts,
They have come home;
Mine, and mine only,
He has not come."

ARINA. [*Enters with bottles and glasses; and a servant-girl with relishes*] Here, I've brought them!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. [*To the servant*] Pass it to the young ladies. [*The servant carries wine round to the girls, places the*

tray on the table and goes out] Arina! Bring us some wine. Yes, pour it out, pour out the Madeira, the Madeira; it will cheer us up. That's all right! Let's have a glass; they won't condemn us—we're old folks! [*They drink*] Annushka! Come along and drink some wine. Won't you have some?

ANNA IVANOVNA. Well, why shouldn't I drink some! They say, don't drink when there's no one round, but when there's company, it's all right.

Goes to PELAGEYA EGOROVNA, *drinks and talks in a whisper.*

ARINA. Have you had a drop too much, my boys?

MITYA. I don't drink.

RAZLYULYAYEV. With pleasure! [*He comes up with* GUSLIN *and drinks; then catches hold of* ARINA] Now, then, let's start an old song. [*Sings.*

"Oh, I'll sing an old song,
Of Eréma, of Fomá——"

ARINA. Stop, saucy; you've crumpled me all up!

RAZLYULYAYEV. [*Sings*]

"The reins were in Kalúga;
In Tarús' the hames were hid.
Grooved runners had the sleigh;
All by itself it slid."

The girls laugh.

ARINA. Let me go, I say! Now that's enough! [*Goes out.*

ANNA IVANOVNA. What are you teasing the old woman for? Come and dance with me.

RAZLYULYAYEV. Come on, then! Play for us, Yasha!

YASHA *plays; they dance.*

FIRST GUEST. That's a lively little woman.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, very lively, very lively.

RAZLYULYAYEV. [*Stamping his feet*] That's the way we do it. [*Stops dancing.*

EGORUSHKA. [*Enters*] The girls have come.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Ask them in. [EGORUSHKA *goes out; the girls come in.* ARINA *brings in a dish and covers it*] Sit down and sing the dish songs; I'm so fond of them.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, MASHA, LIZA, *and* ANNA IVANOVNA *take off their rings and put them into the dish; the girls sing.*

"Sow the wheat, my mother, and bake the cake for me. Glory!
Many guests are coming, my lovers for to be. Glory!

Your guests will wear bast slippers, but mine have boots of hide. Glory!
The girl of whom the song is sung, much good it doth betide. Glory!

The girl whose ring is taken out, will find it so without a doubt. Glory!"

RAZLYULYAYEV *rolls up his sleeves, takes out a ring and gives it to* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. High time, high time!

GIRLS. [*Sing*]

"In Bélgorod a sparrow small, Glory!
In Bélgorod sits on a wall. Glory!

In a strange land he looks about. Glory!
Her ring and fortune will come out. Glory!"

ARINA. [*Enters*] The mummers have come; shall I let them in?

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, let them in; let them have a dance. And you girls can sing afterwards.

SCENE VI

The same and mummers; an OLD MAN *with a balalaika or guitar, a* TRAINER *with a bear and goat,* EGORUSHKA *with molasses.*

OLD MAN. [*Bowing*] To all this honest company, greeting!

TRAINER. Make a bow, Mishka! [*The bear bows.*

OLD MAN. Do you wish me to sing and dance and amuse you, and to limber up my old bones?

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. That's all right; yes, dance! Give them some wine, Arinushka.

ARINA *serves the wine; some of them drink.*

OLD MAN. Thank you humbly for your kind words, and for the entertainment. [*Sings.*

"Our lads, though stripped unto the buff,
Even so are bold enough.
Their twelve hands go weaving on;
Now the web of cloth is done.
They made kaftans for us here;
Kaftans do not cost you dear
When you've grist within your hopper.
In our purses silver bright
Will not let us sleep at night.
And the jingling coins of copper
For the tavern raise the call.
Tapster Andrew, quick undo
The inn-door. We've a kaftan new

Here to put in pawn with you;
We won't take it home at all."

[*Goes to one side.*

EGORUSHKA. [*Dances with the molasses*]

"Molasses! Molasses!
It simmers so sweet.
Oh, winter is bitter,
The frost and the sleet.
Stormy and snowy, oh, ways choked with snow,
Unto my darling there's no way to go.

Molasses! Molasses!
It simmers so sweet.
Like a little quail my wife
Sits on her seat.
And I love her for this, and her praises I tell,
For she jaunts on so prettily, proudly and well."

[*Bows.*

FIRST GUEST. Oh, what a fine boy! Ah!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Why, yes, my friend, he's still a child, but he does the best he can. He's young yet. Come here, Egorushka. [EGORUSHKA *comes*] Here's some gingerbread for you. [*Gives it to him;* EGORUSHKA *bows and goes out*] Yes, he's still a child; you can't expect much from him!

The TRAINER *leads the bear; the goat dances.*

OLD MAN. [*Sings*]

"We had a little billy-goat,
And he was clever, too;
He carried in the water,
And set the mush to brew.

He fed Grandpa and Grandma;
But when he went one day

To the dark forest seven wolves
In waiting for him lay.

And one of them was hungry,
And many and many a year
Had he roamed, forever asking
For goat's meat far and near."

TRAINER. [*To the bear*] Ask for wine, in honor of the goat. [*Bear bows.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Arinushka, bring some refreshments for the mummers.

ARINA *brings them something to drink; they drink and bow.*

TRAINER. Now, then, amuse the honorable company. Show how the fair young darlings, the fair young girls, pale and rosy ones, glance at the young men, and watch their suitors. [*Bear shows off*] And how the old woman goes to work, bending, shrivelled; old age has overcome her, the years have broken her down. [*Bear shows off*] Well, now bow to the honorable company.[1]

They go out; the OLD MAN *plays the guitar; the other mummers dance; all watch them.* GUSLIN *and* MITYA *stand near* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA; MITYA *whispers something to her, and kisses her.* RAZLYULYAYEV *comes up.*

RAZLYULYAYEV. What are you doing?

MITYA. What's that to you?

RAZLYULYAYEV. I'll tell Pelageya Egorovna; just see if I don't!

MITYA. You just dare to tell!

[1] Ostróvsky is of course reproducing actual Christmas customs. Count Ilya Tolstoy, in his *Reminiscences of Tolstoy*, tells how his father played the part of the bear at the family Christmas party.

GUSLIN. [*Approaching him*] Look out for me! You see we'll go away from here together; it'll be dark and the alley is lonely—just remember that!

RAZLYULYAYEV. What are you meddling with me for? What's the use? I want to marry her, and I'm going to make proposals. What are you up to! Yes, I mean to marry her!

MITYA. We'll see about that.

RAZLYULYAYEV. Do you think they'll marry her to you? Not much! Not if I know it—I've got lots of money!

ARINA. What a racket! Stop! Some one seems to be knocking. [*All listen*] That's true! They are knocking.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Go and open the door.

ARINA. [*Goes out, then returns*] He's come back himself!

All rise.

SCENE VII

The same with GORDEY KARPYCH *and* KORSHUNOV

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*To the mummers*] What's this rabble! —Get out! [*To his wife*] Wife! Pelageya Egorovna! Greet my guest. [*Speaks in a low voice*] You've ruined me!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. You are welcome, Afrikan Savvich, you are welcome.

KORSHUNOV. Good evening, Pelageya Egorovna. He, he, he! It's very cheerful here! We've struck it just at the right time.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, here I am with the girls. Yes, I'm always with the girls. It's holiday time; I want to give my daughter some fun.

GORDEY KARPYCH. You are welcome, Afrikan Savvich; make yourself at home. [AFRIKAN SAVVICH *seats himself in the armchair at the table. To his wife*] Turn the hussies out.

KORSHUNOV. Why turn them out! Who's going to turn the girls out. He, he, he! They'll sing a song, and we'll listen and watch them, and we'll give them some money, but not turn them out.

GORDEY KARPYCH. As you wish, Afrikan Savvich! Only I am abashed before you! But don't conclude from this that we are all uneducated—this is all the wife; nothing can knock anything into her head. [*To his wife*] How many times have I told you: if you want to have a party in the evening, call in the musicians, and have things in good form. You can't say I deny you anything.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Well, what's the use of musicians—for us old women? *You* can amuse yourself with them!

GORDEY KARPYCH. There, that's the idea of life she has! It makes you laugh to hear her.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. What do you mean? *Idea, idea!* It would be better for you to give your guest something to eat. Would you like something, Afrikan Savvich? Some wine with us old women? [*Pours out Madeira.*

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*Severely*] Wife! Have you really gone out of your mind! Hasn't Afrikan Savvich ever seen Madeira before! Order champagne—a half dozen—and be quick about it! Then order lighted candles in the reception-room where the new furniture is. That will give quite another effect.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. I will do it myself at once. [*Rises*] Arinushka, come on. Excuse me, my dear neighbors.

FIRST GUEST. We will come with you, my dear; it's time we were going home.

SECOND GUEST. It's time, it's time! The nights are dark, and the dogs in the lanes are fierce.

FIRST GUEST. Yes, fierce; very fierce!

[*They bow and go out.*

SCENE VIII

GORDEY KARPYCH, KORSHUNOV, LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, ANNA IVANOVNA, MASHA, LIZA, *girls*, MITYA, GUSLIN, *and* RAZLYULYAYEV.

KORSHUNOV. Let's join the young ladies. Where did you pick up such beauties—he, he! [*Walks towards* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA] Good evening, Lyubov Gordeyevna, my beauty. [LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *bows*] May I join your company?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. We don't drive any one away.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Be seated; you'll be our guest.

KORSHUNOV. You're pretty chilly to the old man! It's Christmas time now, and I suppose we may exchange kisses.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Why be so affectionate?

KORSHUNOV. Gordey Karpych, may I kiss your daughter? And I must confess—he, he—I'm fond of this sort of thing. Yes, well, who doesn't like it! He, he!

GORDEY KARPYCH. You're welcome to do so; don't stand on ceremony.

KORSHUNOV. Will you give me a kiss, young lady?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. If my father wants me to.

[*They exchange kisses.*

KORSHUNOV. Well now, every one of them, right down the line.

ANNA IVANOVNA. I suppose so! I'm not proud.

MASHA. Oh, how embarrassing!

LIZA. Well, there's nothing to be said; I must say it's a treat!

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*Going up to* MITYA] Why are you here? Is this your place? "The crow has flown into the lofty palace!"

MITYA, GUSLIN *and* RAZLYULYAYEV *go out.*

SCENE IX

GORDEY KARPYCH, KORSHUNOV, LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, ANNA IVANOVNA, MASHA, LIZA *and girls.*

KORSHUNOV. [*Seats himself near* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA] I'm not like you, Lyubov Gordeyevna; you didn't even want to kiss me, he, he, he! And I've brought you a little present.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. You needn't have taken the trouble.

KORSHUNOV. Here I've brought you some diamonds, he, he! [*Gives them to her.*

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Oh, they're earrings! I thank you humbly.

ANNA IVANOVNA. Show them to us.

MASHA. But they are charming!

LIZA. And in such good taste!

KORSHUNOV. Give me your hand. [*Takes it and kisses it*] You see, I like you very much, he, he, he! I like you very much; well, but you don't like me, I suppose?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Why shouldn't I like you?

KORSHUNOV. Why? You like some one else, that's why. But you will come to love me! I'm a good man—a jolly man, he, he, he!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. I don't know what you are talking about.

KORSHUNOV. I say, you will come to love me. Why not? I'm not old yet. [*Looks at her*] Am I an old man? He, he, he! Well, well, there's no harm in that. To make up for it you shall wear cloth of gold. I haven't any money! I'm a poor man. I've only got about five hundred thousand, he, he, he! In silver! [*Takes her hand.*

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Rising*] I don't need your money.

GORDEY KARPYCH. Lyubov, where are you going?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. To mother!

GORDEY KARPYCH. Wait! She'll come here.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *sits down.*

KORSHUNOV. You don't want to sit by the old man? Give me your hand, young lady; I will kiss it.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Gives her hand*] Oh, good heavens!

KORSHUNOV. What a hand! He, he, he! Like velvet!

[*Strokes her hand, and then puts on a diamond ring.*

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Freeing her hand*] Oh, let me go! I don't want it; I don't want it!

KORSHUNOV. That's all right; it's no loss to me—it won't ruin me.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. But I don't want it. Give it to whomever you like. [*Takes it off and returns it.*

KORSHUNOV. I gave it to you, and I won't take it back! He, he, he!

Enter PELAGEYA EGOROVNA, *and after her,* ARINA *and* EGORUSHKA *with wine and glasses.*

SCENE X

The same with PELAGEYA EGOROVNA, ARINA, *and* EGORUSHKA

GORDEY KARPYCH. Come now and have a drink.

KORSHUNOV. All right, Gordey Karpych, give me something to drink. And you girls, sing a song in my honor—I love to have respect shown me.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Girls, sing a song for him.

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*Uncorks the bottle, pours out champagne, and offers it to him*] To our dear friend Afrikan Savvich! Make a bow, wife!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. If you please, Afrikan Savvich, I humbly beg you.

KORSHUNOV *takes the glass.*

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*Takes the glass*] Wife, drink!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Oh, somehow I don't like this kind of wine! Well, yes! I'll take just a glass.

GIRLS. [*Sing*]

"Ah, who is he, our bachelor,
And who is still unwed?
Afrikan's our bachelor
And Savvich still unwed.
He jumped on the horse,
The horse skips to and fro;
He rides through the meadows,
And green the meadows grow,
And flowers blow."

KORSHUNOV. [*Seats himself near* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA] That's nice. I like that. Now, then, come here some one. [*A girl comes up, he pats her on the cheek*] Oh, you little bright eyes! You girls, I suppose, need a lot to set off your fair faces and rosy blushes; he, he, he! But I haven't any money! It will be on me, he, he, he! Hold out your apron! [*He tosses her some small change; the girl bows and goes out*] Now, then, Gordey Karpych, tell your wife why we came.

GORDEY KARPYCH. I told you, wife, long ago, that living in this town bored me, because you can't take a step here without seeing that the people are absolutely ignorant and uneducated. And so I want to move from this place to Moscow. But there will be a man there who is no stranger to us—our dear son-in-law, Afrikan Savvich.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Oh! Oh! What are you saying!

KORSHUNOV. Yes, we've shaken hands on it, Pelageya

Egorovna. What are you afraid of? I'm not going to eat her!

Pelageya Egorovna. Oh, Lord! [*Seizes her daughter*] She's my daughter! I won't give her up!

Gordey Karpych. Wife!

Pelageya Egorovna. My dear Gordey Karpych! Don't trifle with a mother's heart! Stop! You've fairly staggered me!

Gordey Karpych. Wife, you know me! And you, Afrikan Savvich, don't be uneasy: with me saying is doing!

Korshunov. You have promised—then keep your word.

[*Rises, goes to the girls, and speaks to them in a low voice.*

Lyubov Gordeyevna. [*Goes to her father*] Father, I will never take a step against your will. But have pity on me, poor girl that I am! Don't ruin my young life!

Gordey Karpych. You're a fool, and don't understand your own happiness! You'll live in Moscow like a lady; you'll ride in a coach. In the first place, you'll live in the city—and not in a wilderness like this! In the second place, these are my orders!

Lyubov Gordeyevna. I dare not disobey your command. Father! [*Bows down to his feet*] Don't make me unhappy for my whole life! Relent, father! Make me do whatever you like, only don't compel me to marry a man I don't love!

Gordey Karpych. I never take back my word. [*Rises.*

Lyubov Gordeyevna. As you wish, father!

[*Bows and goes to her mother.*

Korshunov. There, that business is over! Now, then, girls—a marriage song!

Girls. [*Sing*]

"The flowers in the garden will wither all about me,
The blue flower in the meadow will be faded and forlorn;

And so will my darling of the red cheeks without me;
So rise up early, mother, in the morn.
You must water all the flowers
In the dawn and evening hours
With water very often and with bitter tears in showers."

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Not that, not that! Sing another!

GORDEY KARPYCH. Let's go into the reception-room, Afrikan Savvich. Wife, all of you, come there!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Where can I hide myself!

GORDEY KARPYCH. Arina, bring along the wine!

ARINA. Oh, wait, I can't attend to you now! My darling child! Girls, my dearies! Here's the song we'll sing.

[*She sings.*

"Thou art my own, my mother,
Who grievest day by day,
And at night to God dost pray.
Thou who art so downcast,
Look but once on her here,
Thy daughter who was so dear—
For the last time—the last."

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. For the last time.

At the end of this song GORDEY KARPYCH *and* KORSHUNOV *go out;* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *remains in the embrace of her mother, surrounded by her friends.*

ACT III

A small room in the house of TORTSOV, *furnished with cupboards of various sorts; chests and shelves with plates and silver. Furniture: sofas, armchairs, and tables, all very expensive and crowded together. Usually this room is used as a sort of sitting-room for the mistress of the house, where she directs her household, and where she receives her guests informally. One door leads into the room where the guests are dining, and the other into the inner rooms.*

SCENE I

ARINA *is seated on a chair near the door leading into the dining-room; near her are several girls and women.*

ARINA. [*Looking into the dining-room*] I didn't expect this, my dear friends! I never thought to see it! He fell upon us like a hawk—like snow on the head; he seized our darling swan from the flock of her dear ones, from father, from mother, from kinsfolk, and from friends. We didn't realize what was happening. What things happen in this world of ours! Nowadays people are double-faced and sly, crafty, and cunning. He fairly befogged Gordey Karpych with this and that in his old age, and be began to hanker after his wealth. They have engaged our lovely beauty to a disgusting old man. Now she is sitting there, my darling, broken-hearted! Oh, I'm ready to die! After I have brought you up and nursed you, and carried you in my arms! I cared for you like a little bird—in cotton wool! Just now she and I were talking it over together. "We won't give you up, my child," I said, "to a common man! Only if

some prince comes from foreign lands, and blows his trumpet at our door." But things didn't turn out our way. Now there he sits—the man who is going to tear her away—fat and flabby! Staring and smirking at her! He likes it! Oh, confound you! Well, now they've finished eating and are getting up; I must set to work.

Rises from her chair; the women go out; PELAGEYA EGOROVNA *comes in.*

SCENE II

ARINA *and* PELAGEYA EGOROVNA

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Come along, Arinushka, and help me to get the table ready. Yes, I'll sit down and rest—I'm tired.

ARINA. Of course you are tired, my dear! Day in, day out, on your feet! You aren't as young as you were once!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. [*Seating herself on the sofa*] Oh! Tell them to send the big samovar to the maids' room—the very biggest; and find Annushka and send her to me.

ARINA. Certainly, certainly.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, go along! Go along! Oh, I can't stand it! [ARINA *goes out*] My head's fairly splitting! Nothing but sorrow—and here comes more trouble! Yes, yes, I'm worried to death! Oh, oh, oh! I'm tired out, absolutely tired out! I've a lot to do, and my head's just spinning. I'm needed here, and I'm needed there, and I don't know what to begin on! Really—yes— [*Sits and tries to think*] What a husband for her! What a husband! Oh, oh, oh! How can you expect her to love him! Do you think she is hankering after his money? She is a girl now—in the bloom of youth—and I suppose her heart beats now and then! What she ought to have now is a man she can

love—even if he's poor—that would be life! That would be paradise!

ANNA IVANOVNA *comes in.*

SCENE III

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA *and* ANNA IVANOVNA

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Here are the keys of the tea cupboard. Go along and pour it out for the guests, and do everything that is necessary—you know yourself! I've walked my legs off! But you don't mind it; you're young yet—yes, go and serve them.

ANNA IVANOVNA. I'd just as soon as not. It's no great work; my hands won't wear out!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. There—there's the tea in the cupboard, in the little red caddy.

ANNA IVANOVNA *unlocks the door and takes out the caddy.* MITYA *comes in.*

SCENE IV

The same and MITYA

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. What do you want, Mitya dear?

MITYA. [*Keeping back his tears*] I—I— Pelageya Egorovna, for all your kindness, and for all your consideration—even though it may be I am not worth it—seeing that while I was an orphan—you never deserted me—and like a mother—I will be thankful to you all my life, and will always pray to God for you. [*Bows down to her feet.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. But what are you doing, Mitya?

MITYA. I thank you for everything. And now good-by, Pelageya Egorovna. [*Rises.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Where are you going?

MITYA. I plan to go to my mother's.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Are you going for long?

MITYA. Yes, I asked the master for a vacation, and it's most likely that I'll stay there for good.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. But why do you wish to leave us, Mitya?

MITYA. [*Hesitating*] Why, I just!— You see—I've already decided.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. But when are you going?

MITYA. To-night. [*Is silent*] I thought to myself that I shouldn't see you before to-night, and so I came to say good-by.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Very well, Mitya, if you are needed there—we won't keep you; God be with you! Good-by!

MITYA. [*Bows down to the feet of* PELAGEYA EGOROVNA, *exchanges kisses with her and with* ANNA IVANOVNA; *then bows again and waits*] Might I be allowed to say good-by to Lyubov Gordeyevna? You see we have lived in the same house—maybe I shall die before I see her again!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, you must, you must. Say good-by to her, of course! Annushka, go and fetch Lyubov.

ANNA IVANOVNA. [*Shaking her head*] "One man leads her by one hand, another by the other, a third stands and sheds tears; he loved her, but did not get her."

SCENE V

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA *and* MITYA

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Oh, Mitya, my dear! What trouble we are in! How can we drive it away—get rid of it—I cannot think. It's as if a thunderbolt had struck me! I can't recover myself.

MITYA. You have no one to blame but yourself for your unhappiness, Pelageya Egorovna; you are marrying her off yourself, ma'am.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, we are doing it ourselves; we are marrying her off ourselves! Only it's not with my consent, Mitya! If I had my way, do you think I'd give her up? Do you think I'm her enemy?

MITYA. He's a man—from what I hear—not a very great catch! There's nothing good to be heard of him—except what's bad.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. I know, Mitya dear, I know.

MITYA. Well, from all accounts, I must say this, that most likely Lyubov Gordeyevna, married to such a man, and living far away from you, will absolutely perish—no doubt of it.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Oh, don't speak of it to me, don't speak of it! I'm distracted enough about it without your saying anything. I've worn my eyes out with gazing at her! If I could only look at her enough to last me forever! It's as if I were getting ready to bury her.

MITYA. [*Nearly weeping*] How can such things happen? How can people do such things? She's your own daughter, I suppose!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. If she weren't my own, then I shouldn't be weeping and wailing, and my heart wouldn't be breaking over her tears.

MITYA. Why weep? It would be better not to marry her. Why are you ruining the girl's life, and giving her into slavery? Isn't this a sin? You will have to answer for it to God.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. I know, I know it all, but I tell you, Mitya, it's not my doing. Why do you keep on blaming me? It's horrible enough for me without your talking about

it, and you stir me up still more. Mitya, you should pity me!

MITYA. It's true, Pelageya Egorovna, but I can't endure this sorrow. Maybe it's worse for me than for you! I trust you so much, Pelageya Egorovna, that I will open my heart to you as if you were my own mother. [*Dries his eyes with his handkerchief*] Yesterday evening, when you were having the evening party. [*Tears prevent him from speaking.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Well, well, tell me, tell me!

MITYA. Well, then, she and I made a compact in the dark, that we would go together to you and to Gordey Karpych, and beg you humbly; we were going to say: "Give us your blessing; we cannot live without each other any longer." [*Dries his tears*] And now suddenly, this morning, I heard—and my arms just dropped by my side!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. What are you saying?

MITYA. I swear it, Pelageya Egorovna, in the name of the Lord!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Oh, my dear boy! What a luckless lad you are, now that I know all!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *comes in.*

SCENE VI

The same and LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Here, Lyubov dear! Mitya has come to say good-by; he is going away from here to his mother's.

MITYA. [*Bows*] Good-by, Lyubov Gordeyevna! Don't bear me any ill will!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Good-by, Mitya! [*Bows.*

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Kiss each other good-by; it may

be that God will not let you see each other again. Well, never mind! [MITYA *and* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *kiss each other; she seats herself on the sofa and weeps;* MITYA *also weeps*] Stop, stop your weeping! You will drive me wild!

MITYA. Oh, I'll risk everything now; everything in the world! [*Goes to* PELAGEYA EGOROVNA] Pelageya Egorovna, are you sorry to marry your daughter to an old man, or not?

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. If I weren't sorry, I shouldn't be crying.

MITYA. Will you permit me to speak, Pelageya Egorovna?

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Speak!

MITYA. This is what I have to say: Get her ready and put on her warm clothes. Let her slip out quietly; I'll seat her in my fairy sleigh, and that's the last of us. Then the old man will never see her any more than his own ears! And no matter if I do go to ruin! I will take her to my mother and there we will get married. Oh, just give us a chance! I want some joy in life! At any rate, if I have to pay the price, at least I shall know that I've really lived.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. What do you mean? What do you mean, you scamp?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. What an idea, Mitya!

MITYA. So you don't love me? Or have you ceased to love me?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. What you say is dreadful!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. What an idea, you scamp! Who would dare to take such a sin on his soul? Yes, come to your senses! What are you thinking of?

MITYA. Why, I said if you're sorry! But if you're not sorry—then give her to Afrikan Savvich; sell her into slavery forever and ever. You'll be miserable yourselves

when you see her wretched life; you'll come to your senses, you and Gordey Karpych, but then it will be too late.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. But how could you, without her father's blessing? How could you? Judge for yourself!

MITYA. Certainly, how could we live without a blessing! Then *you* bless us, Pelageya Egorovna. [*Kneels down*] and Gordey Karpych, it may be—himself, in time—somehow——

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. What can I say to you? I feel altogether distracted.— Yes, I'm going out of my mind! I don't know anything! I don't remember anything! Yes, yes, my head spins. Oh, my darlings, my heart is torn!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Goes to* MITYA] No, Mitya, this can't be! Don't torture yourself for nothing; stop! [*Raises him up*] Don't tear my soul! Already my heart is all withered away within me! God be with you; good-by!

MITYA. Why did you deceive me and mock at me?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Don't, Mitya! Why should I deceive you? Why? I fell in love with you; so I told you, myself. But now we must not go against the will of our parents. For it is the will of my father that I should marry; I must submit to him—that is a girl's lot. It must be that that's the right thing since it was so ordained of old. I don't want to go against my father; I don't wish people to talk about me and make an example of me. Although it may be I have broken my heart because of this—at any rate I know that I am acting according to law; no one will dare to look me in the face and jeer. Good-by! [*They kiss.*

MITYA. Well, now I know my fate! [LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *seats herself on the sofa and weeps*] Good-by! [*Bows to* PELAGEYA EGOROVNA] Good-by, Pelageya Egorovna, you have been my benefactress! So long as I live I shall not forget your goodness and kindness to me; you did not forget the orphan in a strange land.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Good-by, my dear; do not blame us in any way—that would be a sin for you. God grant that you may live happily; we shall not forget you.

MITYA *bows and goes out.*

SCENE VII

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA, LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *and later* KORSHUNOV.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. How I pity that boy, Lyubov dear! Oh, my child, oh, dear! It never entered my head that you loved him. How could I guess it, poor old woman that I am! What do I amount to? There, crying is our business, and I haven't any authority over my daughter! But it would be a good idea! I'd enjoy the sight of you in my old age. The boy is such an honest fellow, with such a tender heart, and he would be fond of me in my old age. And as I look at you, my child, how can you help being sad? And I have no way to help you, my darling!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Well, mother, what's the use of thinking about what's impossible, and only torturing ourselves?

Seats herself and is silent; some one knocks; the voice of KORSHUNOV *is heard,* "May I come in?"

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Come in, sir.

KORSHUNOV. [*Entering*] Ah, there she is, my bride! Where were you hiding yourself? He, he! I'll find you, I'll find you anywhere. If you please, Pelageya Egorovna, permit me to talk confidentially with your daughter about our own affairs.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Certainly. [*Goes out.*

KORSHUNOV. [*Seats himself near* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA] What are you crying about, young lady? For shame, for

shame! He, he, he! There! I'm older than you, and I don't cry. [*Looks at her searchingly*] Oh, well, I know what it's about! I suppose you want to marry a young fellow? Now, this, my pretty one [*takes her hand and kisses it*] is just girlish folly. Now, just listen to what I'm going to tell you; I'll tell you the truth straight out. I don't like to deceive any one, and have no need to. Will you listen, eh?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Yes.

KORSHUNOV. Good! Now, we'll begin with this point. Will a young man appreciate your love? Any girl will love a young man; that is nothing unusual for him; but to an old man it is precious. An old man will reward you for your love with some little gift, this and that—with gold, and with velvet—and there's nothing he won't give you. [*Kisses her hand*] And in Moscow there are lots of nice things in the shops; there are things worth giving! So it's nice to fall in love with an old man. That's number one for you! And then this is what happens with a young and good-looking husband. You see they are a fickle lot! Before you know it he will be running after some one else, or some young lady will fall in love with him, and then his wife may pine away. Then come reproaches and jealousy. And what is this jealousy, eh? He, he, he! Do you know, young lady, what this jealousy is?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. No, I don't know.

KORSHUNOV. But I know! It isn't like a needle prick in the finger; it's far more painful than that. You see the cursed thing consumes a man. From jealousy people stab one another, and poison one another with arsenic! [*Laughs spasmodically and coughs*] But when any one falls in love with an old man, then all is peaceful for his wife. And here's something else I will tell you, my dear young lady: Young men like to go on sprees; they like gayety and distraction,

and all sorts of dissipations, and their wives may sit at home and wait for them till midnight. And they come home drunk, and bully their wives, and swagger. But an old man will just sit near his wife; he'll die before he'll leave her. And he would like to look into her eyes all the time and to caress her and to kiss her hands. [*Kisses them*] Just like that.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Did your deceased wife love you?

KORSHUNOV. [*Looks at her attentively*] And why do you ask this, young lady?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. I just wanted to know.

KORSHUNOV. You wanted to know? [*Rises*] No, she didn't love me, and I didn't love her either. She wasn't worth loving—I took her, poor, a beggar, just for her beauty; I took care of her whole family; I saved her father from prison; she went about in gold.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Love cannot be bought with gold.

KORSHUNOV. Whether you love a man or not, you ought to show him some regard. They needed money, they had nothing to live on; I gave it to them, I didn't refuse. And *I* needed their love. Had I a right to exact this or not? You see I paid money for it! It's a sin to make complaints about me. Whoever I love has a good living in the world, and if I don't love any one, then he need not reproach me. [*He becomes excited and walks about*] Yes, I'm that man's enemy; he'd better keep out of my sight! My words and looks, more than my deeds, shall pursue him! I won't give the man room to breathe! I— [*Stops and bursts out laughing*] And you really thought that I was such a cross man? He, he! I said it in fun, for a joke! I'm a simple, kind old man! I'll dandle you in my arms [*hums*]; I'll rock you in a little cradle; I'll sing you to sleep. [*Kisses her hands.*

GORDEY KARPYCH *comes in.*

SCENE VIII

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, KORSHUNOV, *and* GORDEY KARPYCH

GORDEY KARPYCH. Ah, so that's where my son-in-law is! We've been looking for you. We've already started in on the champagne. Come along to the guests; at our house a feast isn't a feast without you.

KORSHUNOV. I like it here.

GORDEY KARPYCH. Then we'll order it to be served here, and we'll drink it with you. [*Walks to the door*] Hey, boy, serve the wine here! On a silver tray! [*Sits down*] Now, son-in-law, what do you say?

KORSHUNOV. Nothing.

GORDEY KARPYCH. How, nothing?

KORSHUNOV. Just nothing.

GORDEY KARPYCH. But don't you really? [*Looks at him*] Can you understand me now?

KORSHUNOV. Why shouldn't I understand you?

GORDEY KARPYCH. Now we've had this little spree! So now you tell me, what sort of a man I am. Can they appreciate me here?

KORSHUNOV. Why should they appreciate you?

GORDEY KARPYCH. No, tell me this: Isn't everything well done here? In other houses a young fellow waits at table in a Russian smock, or there's a peasant girl; but in my house there's a butler in cotton gloves. This butler is a trained man, from Moscow; he knows all the ways of society —where each man should be seated, and what's to be done. But how is it at other people's houses? They collect in one room, they sit down in a ring, and sing peasant songs. Of course it's jolly, but I consider it's vulgar; there's no style about it. And what do they drink in their boorishness?

Home-made cordials, all sorts of cherry water! And they don't even *know* that champagne is the proper thing! Oh, if I could live in Moscow, or in Petersburg, I'd make a point of following every fashion.

KORSHUNOV. You don't mean every fashion?

GORDEY KARPYCH. Every one. As long as my money held out, I wouldn't stint myself. You just look out, Lyubov; you toe the mark! Or else your bridegroom—you see he's from Moscow—may be ashamed of you. I suppose you don't even know how to walk gracefully, and you don't understand how to talk as is proper in company.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. I say what I feel, father; I wasn't brought up in a boarding-school.

The butler enters, and gives wine to KORSHUNOV *and* GORDEY KARPYCH. *He places the bottles on the table, and goes out.*

GORDEY KARPYCH. That's it, son-in-law! Just let them know what sort of man Gordey Karpych Tortsov is!

EGORUSHKA *comes in.*

EGORUSHKA. Uncle Gordey Karpych, come here, if you please.

GORDEY KARPYCH. What's the matter with you?

EGORUSHKA. Come, please: there's such a scene! [*Laughs.*

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*Approaching*] What's the matter?

EGORUSHKA. Uncle Lyubim Karpych has come in.

GORDEY KARPYCH. Why did they let him in?

EGORUSHKA. It must be that he just took it into his head; we can't stop him, anyhow. [*Bursts out laughing.*

GORDEY KARPYCH. What's he doing?

EGORUSHKA. He's turning out the guests. [*Bursts out laughing*] "You're glad to eat another man's bread," says he. "I'm also the host," says he. "I," says he——

[*Bursts out laughing.*

GORDEY KARPYCH. Sh—he's ruined me!

[*Goes out with* EGORUSHKA.

KORSHUNOV. What's all this about?

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. I don't know. It must be that uncle is— Sometimes he takes a notion.

Enter RAZLYULYAYEV, MASHA, *and* LIZA.

SCENE IX

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA, KORSHUNOV, RAZLYULYAYEV, MASHA, *and* LIZA.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. [*At the door*] Where is your brother? Where is Lyubim Karpych? What has he done? Oh, misery!

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. He isn't here, mother.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA *goes out.*

RAZLYULYAYEV. There you are! Lyubim Karpych is playing some famous tricks! Ha, ha, ha! He's cutting up such capers, it beats all!

LIZA. It isn't at all funny, it's just rude!

MASHA. I simply didn't know what to do from embarrassment.

They seat themselves on the sofa. LYUBIM KARPYCH *comes in.*

SCENE X

The same and LYUBIM KARPYCH

LIZA. Oh, good heavens, again!

MASHA. This is terrible!

RAZLYULYAYEV. Ha, ha, ha!

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Gurr, gurr, gurr; bul, bul, bul! With the finger nine! With the cucumber fifteen! How do,

friend! [*Holds out his hand to* KORSHUNOV] My respects! I haven't seen you for a thousand years and a day! How are you?

KORSHUNOV. Oh, is this you, Lyubim?

LYUBIM KARPYCH. [*Covering his face with his hands*] I'm not I, and the horse is not mine, and I'm not a coachman.

KORSHUNOV. I remember you, brother! You used to roam the town and pick up kopeks.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. You remember how I used to pick up kopeks, but do you remember how you and I used to go on sprees together? How we sat through the dark autumn nights, and how we skipped back and forth, from the tavern to the wine-shop? And don't you know who ruined me, and who turned me out with a beggar's wallet?

KORSHUNOV. Why didn't you look out for yourself? Nobody dragged you in by the collar, my dear fellow. It's your own fault.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. I was a fool! But, well, *you* haven't much to be proud of! You raised me to such heights, you promoted me to such a place—I've stolen nothing, and yet I'm ashamed to look men in the eyes!

KORSHUNOV. You're the same old joker as ever! [*Turning to* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA] You've got a jolly uncle! For old acquaintance sake, we'll surely have to give him a ruble.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Sh! It's not a question of rubles here! Pay up your old debts, and for my niece here a million three hundred thousand! I won't sell her cheaper.

KORSHUNOV. [*Laughing*] Won't you come down?

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Not a kopek!

RAZLYULYAYEV. Aha, Lyubim Karpych! Don't you take any less!

GORDEY KARPYCH *comes in.*

SCENE XI

The same with GORDEY KARPYCH

GORDEY KARPYCH. So you are here! What are you doing in my house? Clear out!

KORSHUNOV. Wait a bit, Gordey Karpych; don't turn him out! Why turn him out? Let him show off and make jokes. He, he, he!

LYUBIM KARPYCH. It's my brother that's joking, in giving his daughter to you, but I'll play such a joke on you as won't suit your stomach!

GORDEY KARPYCH. This isn't the place for him. Get out!

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Wait, brother, don't turn me out! Do you think Lyubim Tortsov has come to make jokes? Do you think Lyubim Tortsov is drunk? I have come to you to ask riddles. [*To* KORSHUNOV] Why has an ass long ears? Now, then, give us an answer?

RAZLYULYAYEV. That's a hard one!

KORSHUNOV. How do I know?

LYUBIM KARPYCH. So that all may know that he is an ass. [*To his brother*] Here's a riddle for you! To whom are you marrying your daughter?

GORDEY KARPYCH. That's not your affair! You've no business to ask me.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. And here's another question for you. Are you an honest merchant, or not? If you are honest, don't associate with a dishonest one. You can't touch soot and not be defiled.

KORSHUNOV. Joke away—but don't forget yourself, my dear fellow! Turn him out, or make him keep quiet.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. That meant you! One can see you are as clean as a chimney-sweep!

GORDEY KARPYCH. Brother, go away quietly, or it will be the worse for you.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. [*Starting up in a fright*] Uncle, stop!

LYUBIM KARPYCH. I won't be quiet! Now blood has begun to talk!

All the domestics and guests enter.

SCENE XII

The same with PELAGEYA EGOROVNA, ANNA IVANOVNA, GUSLIN, *guests, and servants.*

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Listen, good people! They are insulting Lyubim Tortsov, they are driving him away. But am I not a guest too? Why should they drive me away? My clothes are not clean, but I have a clean conscience! I'm not Korshunov; I didn't rob the poor, I didn't ruin another's life, I didn't torment my wife with jealousy. Me they drive away, but he's their most esteemed guest, and he's put in the place of honor. Well, never mind! They'll give him another wife. My brother is marrying his daughter to him! Ha, ha, ha! [*Laughs tragically.*

KORSHUNOV. [*Jumps up*] Don't believe him; he lies! He says this out of spite to me. He's drunk!

LYUBIM KARPYCH. How out of spite? I pardoned you long ago. *I'm* a man of small account, a crawling worm, the lowest of the low! But don't you do evil to others.

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*To the servants*] Take him away!

LYUBIM KARPYCH. [*Holding up one finger*] Sh, don't touch me! It's an easy life in this world for a man whose eyes are shameless! Oh, men, men! Lyubim Tortsov is a drunk-

ard, but he's better than you! Here, now, I'll go away of my own accord. [*Turning to the crowd*] Make way—Lyubim Tortsov is going! [*Goes, and suddenly turns round*] Unnatural monster! [*Goes out.*

KORSHUNOV. [*Laughing in a forced way*] So that's the way you keep order in your house! That's how you follow the fashions! At your house drunkards insult the guests! He, he, he! "I," says he, "shall go to Moscow; here they don't understand me!" Such fools are almost extinct in Moscow! They laugh at 'em there! "Son-in-law, son-in-law!" He, he, he! "Dear father-in-law!" No, humbug, I won't let myself be insulted for nothing. No, you come along and bow down to me! Beg me to take your daughter!

GORDEY KARPYCH. You think I'll bow down to you?

KORSHUNOV. Yes, you will; I know you! You want a fine wedding. You'd hang yourself if only to astonish the town! But nobody wants her! How unlucky for you! He, he he!

GORDEY KARPYCH. After you've said such words as these I won't have anything more to do with you! I never bowed down to any one in my life! If it comes to this, I'll marry her to any man I choose. With the money that I shall give as her dowry any man will——

MITYA *comes in, and stops in the doorway.*

SCENE XIII

The same and MITYA

MITYA. [*Turning towards the crowd*] What's all this noise?

GORDEY KARPYCH. Here, I'll marry her to Mitya!

MITYA. What, sir?

GORDEY KARPYCH. Silence! Yes—I'll marry her to Mitya—to-morrow! And I'll give her such a wedding as

you never saw! I'll get musicians from Moscow! I'll ride alone in four coaches!

KORSHUNOV. We'll see, we'll see! You'll come to ask my pardon, you will! [*Goes out.*

SCENE XIV

The same without KORSHUNOV

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. To whom, Gordey Karpych, did you say?

GORDEY KARPYCH. To Mitya— Yes! What airs he put on! As if I were worse than he! "You'll come and bow down!" He lies! I won't go and bow down! Just to spite him I'll marry her to Dmitry. [*All are astonished.*

MITYA. [*Takes* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA *by the hand and goes to* GORDEY KARPYCH] Why out of spite, Gordey Karpych? One does not do such things out of spite. I don't want you to do it out of spite. I'd rather suffer torment all my life. If you are kind enough, then give us your blessing as is proper, in a fatherly fashion, with love. Because we love each other, and even before this happened, we wanted to confess our guilt to you. And now I'll be a true son to you forever, with all my heart.

GORDEY KARPYCH. What, what, "with all your heart"? You're glad of the chance! But how did you ever dare to think of it? Is she your equal? Remember to whom you're talking.

MITYA. I know very well that you are my master, and that I, because of my poverty, cannot be her equal; but however, think as you please. Here I am; I've fallen in love with your daughter with all my heart and soul.

LYUBIM KARPYCH *comes in and takes his stand in the crowd.*

SCENE XV

The same and LYUBIM KARPYCH

GORDEY KARPYCH. Well, how could you help loving her? Your taste isn't bad! And you'll get plenty of money with her, which is fine for a penniless fellow like you—without a rag to your back!

MITYA. It is so insulting for me to hear this from you, that I have no words. Better keep silent. [*Walks away*] If you please, Lyubov Gordeyevna, you speak.

LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA. Father, I have never gone against your will! If you wish for my happiness, then give me to Mitya.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Why, why, really, Gordey Karpych, why do you keep changing your mind so? Why do you? I was beginning to feel happy; my heart was just beginning to feel easy, and now you begin again. Do stick to something; otherwise what does all this mean? Really! First you say to one man, and then to the other! Was she born your daughter just to be a martyr?

LYUBIM KARPYCH. [*From the crowd*] Brother, give Lyubov to Mitya!

GORDEY KARPYCH. You here again! Do you understand what you've done to me to-day? You've put me to shame before the whole town! If you felt this you wouldn't dare to show yourself in my sight—and then you slink in and give me advice! If it were only a man talking and not you.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. You'd better bow down to Lyubim Tortsov's feet, just because he *has* put you to shame.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. That's it, dear Lyubim! We ought to bow down to your feet; that's just it! You have taken a great sin from our souls; all our prayers could never have freed us from this sin.

GORDEY KARPYCH. What, am I a monster to my own family?

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. You're no monster, but you would have ruined your daughter through your own folly; I tell you this straight out! They marry girls to old men who are a lot better than Afrikan Savvich, and even so they live miserable lives.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Permit me! [*Sings*] Tum-ty-tum, tum-ty-tum! [*Dances*] Look at me, here's an example for you! Lyubim Karpych stands before you large as life! He went along that road, he knows what it is! And I was rich and respected, I drove about in coaches, I played such pranks as would never come into your head; and then head over heels down. Just see what a dandy I am!

GORDEY KARPYCH. No matter what you say to me, I don't want to listen; you are my enemy for the rest of my life.

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Are you a man, or a wild beast? Have pity on Lyubim Tortsov! [*Kneels down*] Brother, give Lyubov to Mitya—he will give me a corner. I was chilled and hungry. I was growing old, and it was hard for me to play the fool in the cold for a piece of bread; at least in one's old age one wants to live decently. You see I've been cheating people, I've been begging alms, and have spent it in drink. They'll give me work, and then I'll have my kettle of soup. Then I'll thank God, brother; even *my* tears will reach to heaven. What if he is poor, eh? If I had been poor, I should have been a man. Poverty is no crime.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Gordey Karpych, haven't you any feelings?

GORDEY KARPYCH. [*Wiping away a tear*] And you really thought that I hadn't? [*Lifts up his brother*] Well, brother, thank you for bringing me back to reason; I almost went out of my mind completely. I don't know how such a rotten

notion got into my head. [*Embraces* MITYA *and* LYUBOV GORDEYEVNA] Now, children, say thank you to your Uncle Lyubim Karpych, and live in happiness.

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA *embraces the children.*

GUSLIN. Uncle, may I speak now?

GORDEY KARPYCH. You may, you may! Ask for whatever you want, every one of you! Now I have become another man.

GUSLIN. Well, Annushka, it's our turn now!

ANNA IVANOVNA. Well, now, we'll have a dance; only hold your hat on!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Yes, let's dance, let's dance!

RAZLYULYAYEV. [*Goes to* MITYA *and slaps him on the shoulder*] Mitya! For a friend I give up everything! I loved her myself, but for you—I give her up. Give me your hand. [*Clasps his hand*] That's all—take her; I give her up to you! For a friend I don't regret anything! That's the way we do it when it comes to the point! [*Wipes away his tears with the lappet of his coat and kisses* MITYA] He told the truth then; drunkenness is no crime—well, I mean—poverty is no crime. I always make slips!

PELAGEYA EGOROVNA. Oh, yes, here they all are! [*To the girls*] Now, then, girls, a jolly song! Yes, a jolly one! Now we'll celebrate the wedding with all our hearts! With all our hearts! [*The girls begin to sing.*

LYUBIM KARPYCH. Sh! Obey orders!

He sings; the girls join in.

"We have done the business;
All the trade is driven.
The betrothal we will plight,
And upon the wedding night
A fine feast shall be given."

SIN AND SORROW ARE COMMON TO ALL

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

CHARACTERS

Valentín Pávlych Babáyev,[1] *a young landowner*

Lev Rodiónych Krasnóv, *a shopkeeper, about thirty years of age*

Tatyána Danílovna (*called* Tánya), *his wife*

Lukérya Danílovna Zhmigúlin (*called* Lúsha), *her sister, an old maid and daughter of a government clerk now dead*

Arkhíp, *blind old man, grandfather of* Krasnóv

Afónya (Afanásy), *invalid boy about eighteen years of age, brother of* Krasnóv

Manúylo Kalínych Kúritsyn, *flour dealer about forty-five years of age*

Ulyána Rodiónovna Kúritsyn, *his wife, sister of* Krasnóv

Shishgálev, *government clerk*

Záychikha (called Prokófyevna), *landlady of the lodgings taken by* Babáyev

Karp, Babáyev's *attendant*

The action takes place in a district town.

[1] Womanish.

SIN AND SORROW ARE COMMON TO ALL

ACT I

TABLEAU I

A room, cheaply papered, shabbily furnished; in the rear two doors, one opening on the street, the other leading into an adjoining room; the windows are hung with chintz curtains.

SCENE I

KARP *is unfastening a valise, and* ZAYCHIKHA (PROKOFYEVNA) *is looking out of the window.*

PROKOFYEVNA. Just look, dear sir, how many people have gathered.

KARP. What do they want? Why are they curious?

PROKOFYEVNA. Every one, dear sir, wishes to know who it is that has arrived.

KARP. They say you're provincials, and you certainly are provincials. Well, tell them that it's Babayev, Valentin Pavlych, a landowner.

PROKOFYEVNA. [*Speaking through the window*] Babayev, a landowner. [*To* KARP] They're asking why you came.

KARP. On business, of course. Did you think we came here for sport? Much chance there would be for that here.

PROKOFYEVNA. [*Through the window*] For business. [*To* KARP] Will you remain long?

KARP. We certainly haven't come to settle here. We may stay two days; not longer, you may be sure.

PROKOFYEVNA. [*Through the window*] For two days. [*Withdraws from the window*] Now I've satisfied them. In five minutes the entire city will know.

KARP. Your lodging is all right; it's clean.

PROKOFYEVNA. Certainly it's clean, sir. No great frills, but it's clean. Of course there's no great travelling to our town.

KARP. It isn't on the highway.

PROKOFYEVNA. Highway, not much! Yet the best people that do come here, lodge with me. I know a lot of the landowners who come here. They are used to me; very few of them ever go to the hotel.

KARP. Because it's so noisy.

PROKOFYEVNA. Yes, I should say so! Down-stairs is a bar-room; and on market days the noise is dreadful. Please tell me, wasn't your master's mother Sofya Pavlovna, the wife of General Babayev?

KARP. Exactly so.

PROKOFYEVNA. Is their estate called Zavetnoye?

KARP. Yes.

PROKOFYEVNA. So, so. I recognized him just now. I used to see him as a youngster. He often rode to town with his mother, and they would call on me. Does he live in the country?

KARP. No, we are most of the time in St. Petersburg; but now we have come to the country to arrange business matters.

PROKOFYEVNA. So, so. But is he a good man to deal with?

KARP. Pretty good.

PROKOFYEVNA. Well, thank the Lord! May He reward him! What business brought you to our town?

KARP. Oh, those endless legal matters. Petty business,

something to bear witness to; but I suppose he'll waste five days over it.

PROKOFYEVNA. It wouldn't be surprising. Have you called on the judges?

KARP. Yes, we called on them all. Just now they sent us a clerk from court.

PROKOFYEVNA. They'll probably do it quicker for you than for us. If you need anything, knock on the wall, and I'll come. [*Goes out.*

BABAYEV *and* SHISHGALEV *enter at the side door.*

SCENE II

BABAYEV, SHISHGALEV, *and* KARP

BABAYEV. So you say, my dear sir, that it is absolutely impossible?

SHISHGALEV. [*Bowing and continually blowing his nose and covering his mouth with his hand*] But, believe me, sir, if it were at all possible we should have——

BABAYEV. Maybe it is possible?

SHISHGALEV. Judge for yourself, sir. Now the court session has ended, it is quite impossible to assemble the members; to-morrow is a holiday—then comes Saturday and then Sunday.

BABAYEV. Just think, my dear sir, how you are treating me!

SHISHGALEV. How am I to blame? I'm the humblest sort of man.

BABAYEV. But, my dear sir, what shall I do here for the next four days? It is dreadful!

SHISHGALEV. You can look around, sir, and take a glance at our city.

KARP. What's the use of looking at it? What is there to see here? I suppose you'll say that St. Petersburg is not as fine a city as yours.

BABAYEV. Have you any kind of social life?

SHISHGALEV. I beg pardon, sir?

BABAYEV. I said, have you any social life, any sort of club, entertainment with music, or parties?

SHISHGALEV. No, we haven't.

BABAYEV. But where do the members of the court and the rest of them spend their time?

SHISHGALEV. They usually spend it together.

BABAYEV. How together?

SHISHGALEV. Every day is assigned. For instance, to-day they are with the prefect, to-morrow with the judge, day after to-morrow with the attorney; then with the farmer of the spirit tax, and next with the retired police captain—and so all the week goes by.

BABAYEV. At what time do they meet?

SHISHGALEV. About six o'clock.

BABAYEV. What do they do then?

SHISHGALEV. They play preference.

BABAYEV. And what else, certainly not only preference?

SHISHGALEV. That's the truth, just preference. But usually they have tables with drinks and refreshments—just as it should be. They play, and then they take a bite, and so they pass the time.

BABAYEV. And do they all drink, from six o'clock on?

SHISHGALEV. Oh, no, by no means! Only the dealer, or some one who has to pay a fine.

BABAYEV. Then, my dear sir, I can't help it. I've got to wait.

SHISHGALEV. Just wait awhile, sir. On Monday you will

please appear in court, and we'll arrange the matter without delay.

BABAYEV. Very well, I will be in court on Monday. But you'll have some writing to do for me. Then I'll give you —as is proper—I don't like any one to labor for me for nothing.

SHISHGALEV. My family is large, Your Honor——

BABAYEV. What's that?

SHISHGALEV. Do have the kindness to bestow a little something——

BABAYEV. Really, I don't know; how's that? How much do you want?

KARP. Give him one ruble, sir; that'll be enough for him.

BABAYEV. [*Giving the money*] Here you are—I'm really ashamed.

SHISHGALEV. [*Depositing the coin in his pocket*] Not at all. I thank you heartily; I wish you all good fortune. [*Goes out.*

SCENE III

BABAYEV *and* KARP

BABAYEV. How rude you are, Karp.

KARP. If you begin to be sentimental with 'em, sir, they'll get the habit of calling around here and bewailing their fate. No amount of money will suffice 'em. They're a godless crowd.

BABAYEV. Well, what'll I do? I'd like to go for a walk, but it's still hot. Karp, what shall I do?

KARP. I'll tell you what, go to sleep; after travelling it's a good thing.

BABAYEV. But what shall I do at night?

KARP. At night just the same. They say people sleep when they're bored.

BABAYEV. How stupid I was not to bring any books. If I only had some frivolous intrigue to amuse myself with for four days. [*Goes out through the side door.*

KARP. So that's what you wish! An intrigue! That's his style! He was his mother's spoiled darling and he was raised with young ladies and in the housemaids' room. and he has a hankering for that kind of thing now. Since I've lived in St. Petersburg with him, what things I have seen; it was shameful! I wonder if he's asleep? I'd like to have a nap. [*He's about to lie down when the door opens*] Who's that?

LUKERYA *comes in.*

SCENE IV

KARP *and* LUKERYA

KARP. What do you want?

LUKERYA. Valentin Pavlych.

KARP. What do you want of him?

LUKERYA. If I want to see him, of course it must be necessary.

KARP. Do you want help of some sort?

LUKERYA. How rude! Aren't you aware that the Zhmigulin ladies were always welcome at the home of your master's mother? I am also very intimately acquainted with Valentin Pavlych.

KARP. You are? I doubt it.

LUKERYA. Maybe you stupidly misunderstand my words in some way that's beyond me. [*Sits down*] Your business is to go right off and announce me.

KARP. I tell you he's asleep now.

LUKERYA. That can't be, because I've just seen him through the window.

KARP. Well, I see I can't do anything with you; I'll have to announce you. [*Goes out.*

LUKERYA. In these modern times, these new changes have done a lot to spoil people. He ought to have found out first what my rank was, and then treated me accordingly. And it's not his business whether I came to ask for aid or not. To be sure, people of our station are often engaged in that, but not all. Maybe Valentin Pavlych has become so proud since he has lived in St. Petersburg that he will not wish to see me. But I'm so anxious to show every one here what acquaintances we have. I think he didn't disdain us formerly, especially sister Tanya.

BABAYEV *comes in.*

SCENE V

BABAYEV *and* LUKERYA

BABAYEV. Whom have I the honor of addressing?

LUKERYA. I hardly expected, Valentin Pavlych, that you would so soon forget old acquaintances.

BABAYEV. Be seated, please. [*Both sit down*] I somehow do not recall.

LUKERYA. Of course, nowadays feelings are not in vogue; now it's all a matter of calculation; but we provincials aren't like you in St. Petersburg; we remember our former acquaintances, and especially our benefactors.

BABAYEV. I agree with you—benefactors should always be remembered.

LUKERYA. We are so indebted to your mother that words fail me to express it. She did so much for the Zhmigulin family.

BABAYEV. The Zhmigulins?

LUKERYA. Especially for sister Tanya and me.

BABAYEV. [*Rising*] Tanya—Tatyana Danilovna?

LUKERYA. Do you remember, now?

BABAYEV. So you are her sister?

LUKERYA. Lukerya Danilovna Zhmigulin.

BABAYEV. Pardon me, I beg of you.

LUKERYA. I'm not in the least offended because you remember my sister more readily than you do me. She's so beautiful that it's impossible to forget her.

BABAYEV. Yes, yes, she was an exceedingly beautiful girl; we were great friends.

LUKERYA. I'm aware of that. Who should know it if not I? Being the elder sister I had to care for the younger.

BABAYEV. Yes, yes, to be sure. Tell me, if you please, where is she now? What is she doing?

LUKERYA. She's here in the city, married.

BABAYEV. Married? Does she live happily?

LUKERYA. Judge for yourself. She lives in poverty among stupid, ignorant people. It isn't as it was in your mother's house at Zavetnoye. That was an earthly paradise! Your mother was the kindest of ladies, and liked to have everybody happy at her house. There were always lots of young ladies in her house, and likewise young gentlemen, and they played games from morning till night. She made even the chambermaids play tag with us and other games, and she looked on and enjoyed it.

BABAYEV. Yes, yes, it was but a short time ago. It's no more than three years since I left for St. Petersburg.

LUKERYA. I remember it very well. You left three years ago last carnival time. Your mother didn't like any of her guests to be moody or to read books. She would say: "Why, you're spoiling everybody's spirits." Every one was madly

gay for her sake, but in the midst of all that gayety anybody who had a keen eye could see quite a little.

BABAYEV. Nothing more natural! Men, girls, and young ladies continually together—of course they couldn't help falling in love.

LUKERYA. You were especially strong in that line. You were continually with Tanya, and you never left her, so they called you the "doves."

BABAYEV. One's heart's not a stone, Lukerya Danilovna. Even you yourself—do you remember the surveyor?

LUKERYA. He isn't worth remembering. Later on he behaved in a very ungentlemanly way to me. But fate has punished him for his lack of courtesy towards a girl of noble birth. He's now in jail for being drunk and disorderly.

BABAYEV. Kindly tell me how it happened that your sister married?

LUKERYA. When your mamma died last summer we had absolutely no one left to help us. Our papa in his old age was of no account in the city. He was a timid man, and so he didn't get on well. Our father was a clerk in the Chancery Office, and he received a salary of thirty rubles a year. How could we live on such a sum? And yet we saw something of society. At first we were hardly ever at home, and your mamma aided us in many ways. Suddenly all that stopped, and soon our father died. At that time Tanya received an offer from—I'm almost ashamed to tell you.

BABAYEV. Why, what are you ashamed of?

LUKERYA. You are receiving me so graciously, and your interest in my sister makes me feel that our actions have been very uncivil.

BABAYEV. That can't be helped. Probably it was all due to circumstances. What are you to blame for?

LUKERYA. You can hardly imagine the degree of embar-

rassment this relationship causes me. In a word, our circumstances were such that she was forced to marry a petty shopkeeper.

BABAYEV. A petty shopkeeper? What kind of shop has he?

LUKERYA. A vegetable shop. You can see it from here, the sign reads, "Lev Krasnov."

BABAYEV. Yes, I noticed it. Is he a good man?

LUKERYA. Considering the type, he's a very nice man, and he loves sister very dearly. Yet there is something so inherently bad about his calling that, judge as you will, he's still not very far removed from a peasant. That trait of character, if you boil a man for seven years in a kettle, you cannot boil out. Yet I must give him credit for taking good care of his house. He doesn't give himself any rest day or night; he toils hard all the time. As for my sister, he's willing to give her whatever her heart desires, even his last kopek, just to please her, so that she does absolutely nothing, and lives like a lady. But his manners are boorish, and his conversation embarrasses us very much. Altogether this is not the kind of happiness I wished for Tanya. Judging by her beauty and the standing of her former admirers, she should now be riding in a carriage. As it is, necessity has forced her to marry a peasant, almost for a crust of bread, and to blush for him whenever she sees anybody.

BABAYEV. So Tatyana Danilovna has married—I'm sorry.

LUKERYA. You needn't feel sorry. She's no match for you.

BABAYEV. Of course.—Here I am in this city, and owing to circumstances I'm forced to remain at least four days, and maybe more. What am I going to do? I'm very much pleased that you have called on me. If it hadn't been for you I don't know what I should have done with myself.

Now, just imagine, if your sister weren't married, we'd spend these four days so that we shouldn't know how the time was passing. [*Takes her by the hand*] Isn't that true?

LUKERYA. Who's keeping you from that now?

BABAYEV. Well, you see it's awkward; being married, what will her husband think? It's really provoking.

LUKERYA. You don't mean it! It seems to me that you used to have different opinions on such things. You weren't so anxious to know what pleased the husbands and what didn't.

BABAYEV. Yes, but that was in an entirely different social circle. There manners are much more free.

LUKERYA. How do you know whether my sister has freedom or hasn't?

BABAYEV. [*Taking both her hands*] At all events, I'm so glad, so thankful to you for furnishing me with diversion when I was bored. Don't you want something? Be good enough to make yourself at home; everything is at your service. Will you have some tea?

LUKERYA. Thank you, I've just had tea. But I must hurry home now. I have to attend to some matters with sister. Shall I extend her your greetings?

BABAYEV. Please be so kind.

LUKERYA. [*Going to the door*] Why don't you invite sister and me to call on you?

BABAYEV. I should be so happy to have you, only I really don't know how to arrange it. I should like very much to see Tatyana Danilovna.

LUKERYA. If you wish to see her, then where's the obstacle? She isn't a princess imprisoned behind ten locks. You'll go for a walk, no doubt, as you can't remain in your room?

BABAYEV. I should like to go, but I hardly know in what direction.

LUKERYA. You needn't go far. Stroll out of the rear gate to the river-bank, sit down on the bench and enjoy the beauty of nature. It's a quiet, secluded place; few people ever go there. It's a most delightful walk for sentimental young people. Sister and I will go that way, and there you may be able to see her. Good day! [*She goes out.*

BABAYEV. What a surprise! Could I have expected such good fortune? Little Tanya, little Tanya! I shall see her again! I'll go mad with joy. She was so charming, so delicate. Some people said that she didn't have much sense, but is that a fault in a woman? And then her beauty, her beauty! It's likely that instead of four days I'll stay four weeks. [*Goes out.*

TABLEAU II

The bank of a river; at one side a fence and gate, at the other a corner of a barn; beyond the river stretches the countryside; sunset.

SCENE I

Enter ARKHIP *and* AFONYA

AFONYA. Grandfather, let's rest here awhile. I feel ill to-day. Sit down here on the bench.

ARKHIP. Very well, Afonya, we'll sit down here. You and I are unfortunate: age is overcoming me and sickness you.

AFONYA. I'm not ailing. I was born so. Grandfather, I shan't live long in this bright world.

ARKHIP. Don't listen to old wives' tales. No one knows what fate awaits him.

AFONYA. What do I care for old wives! I know that I shall not live long. My appetite is failing. Others have such hearty appetites after working. They eat a whole lot and want more. There's brother Lev, when he's tired—just keep giving him food. But I don't care if I never eat at all. My soul won't take anything. I just swallow a crust—and am satisfied.

ARKHIP. That helps growth.

AFONYA. No, it doesn't. Why should I grow any more, anyhow! As it is, I am tall for my age. But it's a sign that I shall not live. Just listen, grandfather; a man who is alive thinks of living things, but I don't have any interest in anything. Some people like nice clothes, but for me it's all the same—whatever rag is near at hand—just so I'm warm. For instance, all the boys have some hobby; some like fishing, others games, some sing songs; but nothing attracts me. While others are happy I feel depressed. Misery seems to grip my heart.

ARKHIP. That is God's gift to you. From your childhood you have had no love for this vain world. Some lose their faint-heartedness with years, when woes and afflictions, Afonya, crush and grind a man into powder; but you have never lived, have not yet tasted the world's sorrows or joys, and yet you reason like an old man. Thank God that he has made you wise. The world does not charm you: you do not know temptation, so your sins are less. That is your good fortune. Just listen to me. I, Afonya, have known temptation and have not always turned aside from it, and most often I sought temptation of my own free will. You say everything seems the same to you, that nothing in the world delights you; but to me God's world was good and

bright. Everything beckoned and charmed me. An unsated eye and free will command one to taste all the pleasures of the universe. But in the world, Afonya, good and evil go hand in hand. Well, one's sins may be more in number than the sands of the sea. Luckily God prolonged my life, that I might repent, and did not strike me down in my sins. We repent and humble ourselves and hope for mercy; but you will have nothing to repent of; you, Afonya, are a man of God.

AFONYA. No, grandfather, no, do not speak so. How am I a man of God? I have seen men of God, but they are good and do not remember evil. They are abused and mocked, but they laugh at it, while I am rough and harsh, just like my brother; only brother is forgiving though quick-tempered, while I am not. I, grandfather, I have an evil temper.

ARKHIP. At whom should you be angry, my child; who injures you?

AFONYA. No one injures me, but my heart aches for every one—for you, for brother, for all of you.

ARKHIP. Why are you grieving for us? We have nothing to complain of.

AFONYA. We didn't have anything to complain of, grandfather, before brother married. Grandfather, why does brother love his wife so?

ARKHIP. Why shouldn't he love her? Why did he marry her? You should be happy because he loves his wife. What a foolish fellow you are!

AFONYA. No, I speak the truth. Formerly brother used to love you and me much more than now.

ARKHIP. So you are jealous! Probably you are envious.

AFONYA. No, it isn't envy; but is my brother blind? Does she love him as he does her? Is she worthy of him?

Why is he so servile in the presence of her and her kin? His servility offends me. Is he inferior to her and her sister? One marries a wife to have a helper; but she sits with folded hands. Brother alone works and dances attendance on them. I pity him.

ARKHIP. What business is it of yours? It's his own choice. He works and doesn't force you to. You and I are fed by his kindness.

AFONYA. Don't I know that? Tell me, grandfather, is she any better than brother or not?

ARKHIP. Better or not, she is of different sort.

AFONYA. What do you mean by "different sort"! As it is, brother is obliged to work for them, feed and clothe them, while they give themselves airs. There isn't a better man in the world than brother, and they have made him their drudge.

ARKHIP. How do you know? Your brother himself may not wish her to work.

AFONYA. But if she doesn't work then she'd better not put on airs. Since she married a commoner she should be one like the rest of us. Are we a sort of accursed people? Lord, pardon me for saying it! We too have our communal society and we pay taxes and take part in other obligations. My brother gets money by sweat and toil, and contributes it to the community. She might stay at home and play the lady, but if she marries, then she should know that there is one master in the house—her husband. You see, grandfather, I see and hear everything, since they are so shameless as not to pay any heed to me. Brother gives her kerchiefs and silk dresses, while she and her sister laugh at him and call him a fool. I hear it all; it is bitter to me, grandfather, bitter. I began to speak to brother about it, but he scolded me. [*Pause*] Grandfather, that is why I can't sleep.

What I see by day appears to me at night, gnaws at my heart, and I weep all night. I shan't live long. My health cannot improve now because my temper is altogether too violent. If God would only take me quickly so that I should have less suffering!

ARKHIP. Don't say such sinful things! You have to live and live! You see, Afonya, I have nothing to live for, yet I keep on living. God knows the reason of all this. What a man I am! I never see the fair sun or the bright moon, and likewise I shall never see the green meadows or the cool waters and all creatures of God. But hardest of all is that I cannot see the bright face of man.

AFONYA. It is a pity, grandfather, that you cannot see; but I'm tired of everything, nothing comforts me.

ARKHIP. The reason you are not comforted is that your heart is not at peace. Look at God's world longer and more often, and less at men and women, and you will become lighter of heart; you will sleep at night and have pleasant dreams. Where are we sitting now, Afonya?

AFONYA. On the bank, grandfather, beside Prokofyevna's house.

ARKHIP. Is the bridge at our right?

AFONYA. Yes, grandfather.

ARKHIP. Is the sun at our left?

AFONYA. Yes, grandfather, but it's almost set.

ARKHIP. In a cloud?

AFONYA. No, it is clear. The twilight is so brilliant. We'll have fine weather.

ARKHIP. That's it, that's it. I feel it myself. The air is so light and the breeze so fresh that I do not want to leave. Beautiful, Afonya, beautiful is God's world. Now the dew will fall and fragrance will rise from every flower; and yonder the stars will come out; and above the stars, Afonya, is

our merciful Creator. If we remembered more constantly that He is merciful, we ourselves should be more merciful.

AFONYA. I will try to subdue my heart, grandfather. [BABAYEV *comes in*] Let us go. Some strange gentleman is walking here; he would probably laugh at our talk.

ARKHIP. [*Following* AFONYA] My soul magnifies God.

They go out.

SCENE II

BABAYEV *alone*

BABAYEV. When you are waiting for something pleasant the time seems to drag! I purposely came by the longest road so as not to arrive too early, but nevertheless I got here before they did. How I hate to wait! What a foolish situation! Women generally like to torment: it's their nature; they like to have some one wait for them. Of course, that doesn't apply to Tanya; I believe she's very, very glad that I have arrived. I speak of women of our own sort. I think they torment, because—how shall I express it—the idea is entirely original—in order to compensate themselves in advance for the rights which they lose later. That's the result of being in a lovely landscape face to face with nature! What brilliant thoughts come to one! If this thought were developed at leisure, in the country, it might form a small novel, even a comedy on the order of Alfred de Musset. But such things are not played in our country. They must be presented delicately, very delicately—here the principal thing is the—bouquet. I think some one is coming. Is it they? How shall we meet? Two years of separation mean much.

TATYANA *and* LUKERYA *come in.*

SCENE III

BABAYEV, TATYANA, *and* LUKERYA

TATYANA. [*Extending her hand to* BABAYEV] How do you do, Valentin Pavlych! I was so happy when sister told me that you had returned.

BABAYEV. So, do you still remember me?

TATYANA. Indeed I do! We frequently, that is, sister and I, very frequently speak of you. She tells me that you have forgotten us.

BABAYEV. No, I have not forgotten you. There are memories, my darling Tatyana Danilovna, which are not readily forgotten. My acquaintance with you was of that sort. Isn't that so?

TATYANA. [*Dropping her eyes*] Yes, sir.

BABAYEV. Let me assure you that as soon as I could tear myself away from St. Petersburg, and come to the country, I continually sought an occasion to visit this city and to find you without fail.

LUKERYA. Have you never found such an occasion before now? Don't tell me that!

BABAYEV. I assure you.

LUKERYA. Much we believe you! Tanya, do not believe the gentlemen; they always deceive.

BABAYEV. Why speak so to me?

LUKERYA. That doesn't apply just to you, but to all other fine young gentlemen.

TATYANA. Shall you remain long in this city?

BABAYEV. Shall I remain long? At first I thought it would depend upon the clerks who have my affair in hand, but now I see that it will depend upon you, my darling Tatyana Danilovna.

TATYANA. That honors me entirely too much. No, tell me, shall you be here three or four days?

BABAYEV. They promised to arrange my affairs in three days, but maybe I'll stay three or four days longer, if you wish me to.

TATYANA. Certainly, I do.

BABAYEV. There is just one drawback, my darling Tatyana Danilovna: your city is dreadfully lonesome. I will remain on one condition, that I may see you as often as possible.

TATYANA. That's very simple. Call on us. We shall be delighted to have you come to tea to-morrow.

BABAYEV. Yes, but it's impossible to call on you often, as gossip and talk spreads, and then there's your husband——

TATYANA. This doesn't concern him. You are my acquaintance; you call on me, not him.

LUKERYA. Then we on our side will observe the courtesies and will return your call. Besides, we often visit your landlady, so if it's pleasant for you to see us, you can call in there.

BABAYEV. [*Withdrawing to one side with* TATYANA] Doesn't married life bore you?

TATYANA. [*After a pause*] I don't know; what can I say to that?

BABAYEV. My darling Tatyana Danilovna, be perfectly frank with me. You know what kind feelings I've always had for you.

TATYANA. Why should I be so frank with you? What good can come of it? It's too late to mend things now.

BABAYEV. If you can't mend things entirely, at least, darling Tatyana Danilovna, you can sweeten your existence for a time, so that you will not be entirely smothered by the vulgar life around you.

TATYANA. For a time, yes! Then life will be harder than ever.

BABAYEV. Do you know, I want to move to the country; then we could be near to one another. I am even ready to move to this town, if only you——

TATYANA. [*Turning away*] Please don't talk to me like that! I didn't expect to hear such things from you, Valentin Pavlych.

LUKERYA. [*To* BABAYEV] You're getting in pretty deep there. I hear everything you're saying.

BABAYEV. Lukerya Danilovna, I think some one is coming. Take a look out on the bank there. I'm anxious that we should not be seen here together.

LUKERYA. Oh, you're a sly gentleman! [*Goes away.*

TATYANA. So you will have tea with us to-morrow, Valentin Pavlych?

BABAYEV. I really don't know—very likely.

TATYANA. No, don't fail to come! [*Pause*] Well, how shall I invite you? [*Takes* BABAYEV *by the hand*] Well, my darling! Well, my precious!

BABAYEV. It seems to me that you have changed, Tatyana Danilovna.

TATYANA. I, changed! Honestly I haven't. Not a bit. Why are you so cruel to me?

BABAYEV. Do you remember Zavetnoye, Tatyana Danilovna?

TATYANA. Why? I remember it all.

BABAYEV. Do you remember the garden? Do you remember the linden walk? Do you remember how, after supper, while mother slept, we used to sit on the terrace? Do you recall the narrow ribbon?

TATYANA. [*In a low voice*] Which one?

BABAYEV. With which you tied my hands.

TATYANA. [*Embarrassed*] Well, what of that? Yes, I remember absolutely everything.

BABAYEV. Just that you, my precious, are now entirely different; you have met me so coldly.

TATYANA. Ah, Valentin Pavlych! Then I was a girl and could love any one I wished; now I am married. Just think!

BABAYEV. Why, certainly. Yet I can't imagine you belonging to any one else. Do what you will, I can hardly control my desire to call you Tanya, as I used to.

TATYANA. Why control yourself? Call me Tanya.

BABAYEV. But what's the use, my dear! You don't love me any more!

TATYANA. Who told you that? I love you as much, even more than before.

BABAYEV. [*Bending towards her*] Is it possible, Tanechka, that that is the truth?

TATYANA. [*Kissing him*] Well, here's my evidence! *Now* do you believe? But, darling Valentin Pavlych, if you don't wish me unhappiness for the rest of my life, we must love one another as we are doing now; but you mustn't think of more than that. Otherwise, good-by to you—away from temptation!

BABAYEV. Set your mind at rest, darling, about that.

TATYANA. No, you swear to me! Swear, so that I may not fear you.

BABAYEV. How foolish you are!

TATYANA. Yes, I am foolish, certainly. If I should listen to the opinions of older people, then I am committing a great wrong. According to the old law, I must love no one other than my husband. But since I can't love him—and loved you before my marriage, and can't change my heart, so I—only God preserve you from—and I won't in any respect—because I wish to live right.

BABAYEV. Calm yourself.

TATYANA. That's the way, my dear Valentin Pavlych.

It means that we shall now have a very pleasant love-affair, without sinning against God, or feeling shame before men.

BABAYEV. Yes, yes, that'll be splendid!

TATYANA. Now I'll give you a kiss because you're so clever! [*Kisses him*] So you will come to-morrow evening?

BABAYEV. And then you'll visit me?

TATYANA. Be sure to come! Then we'll visit you. Now I'm not afraid of you.

BABAYEV. How beautiful you are! You're even lovelier than you used to be.

TATYANA. Let that be a secret. Good-by. Come on, Lusha!

LUKERYA. [*Approaching*] Good-by! Good night, pleasant dreams—of plucking roses, of watering jasmine! [*Going*] But what a man you are! Oh, oh, oh! He's clever, I must say! I just looked and wondered. [*They go out.*

BABAYEV. Now the novel is beginning; I wonder how it'll end!

ACT II

TABLEAU I

A room in KRASNOV'S *house; directly in front a door leading to a vestibule; to the right a window and a bed with chintz curtains; to the left a stove-couch and a door into the kitchen; in the foreground a plain board table and several chairs; along the back wall and window benches; along the left wall a cupboard with cups, a small mirror, and a wall clock.*

SCENE I

TATYANA *stands before the mirror putting on a kerchief;* AFONYA *is lying on the stove-couch;* LUKERYA *comes in with a figured table-cloth.*

LUKERYA. There, Tanya, I've borrowed a cloth from the neighbor to cover our table. Ours is awfully poor.

[*Lays the cloth on the table.*

TATYANA. Have you started the samovar?

LUKERYA. Long ago; it'll boil soon. Well, you see it's just as I told you; that kerchief is much more becoming to you. But why did you stick the pin through it? [*Adjusting it*] There, that's much better.

AFONYA. Where are you dressing up to go to? Why are you prinking so at that mirror?

TATYANA. Nowhere; we're going to stay at home.

LUKERYA. What business is it of yours? Do you think we ought to be as slovenly as yourself?

AFONYA. But who are you fixing up for? For your hus-

band? He loves you more than you deserve even without the fine clothes. Or is it for some one else?

LUKERYA. Hear him! A fool, a fool! yet he understands that she's dressing up for some one else.

TATYANA. Why should I dress for my husband? He knows me anyway. When I dress, of course it's for a stranger.

AFONYA. Who are you going to flirt with? Who are you going to charm? Have you no conscience?

LUKERYA. What's the use of arguing with a fool! All he has to do is to chatter. Lies on the stove-couch and plots trouble.

TATYANA. What kind of judge are you, anyway? My husband never says anything to me, and yet you dare to put in your opinion!

AFONYA. Yes, but he's blinded by you, blinded. You've given him some sort of love-charm.

LUKERYA. Keep still, seeing that God has made you a sick man. Tend to your own business; keep on coughing, there's no sin in that.

AFONYA. Fool—brother is a fool! He's ruined himself.

LUKERYA. Tanya, shouldn't I bring the samovar in here?

TATYANA. Yes, and I'll set the cups. [*Puts cups on the table.* LUKERYA *goes out*] You'd better go into the kitchen.

AFONYA. I'm all right here.

TATYANA. Strangers are coming and you'll make us gloomy.

AFONYA. I won't go.

TATYANA. It's a true proverb: "There's no brewing beer with a fool." Our guest is no cheap shopkeeper like your brother. A gentleman is coming, do you hear? What are you fussing about?

AFONYA. What sort of a gentleman? Why is he coming?

TATYANA. Just the same kind of gentleman as all the rest.

He's our acquaintance, a rich landowner; well, now get out!

AFONYA. He's a gentleman in his own house, but I'm one here. I'm not going to him, but he's coming here. I'm in my own house, and sick, so I won't consider anybody. Was it him you dressed up for?

TATYANA. That's my business, not yours.

LUKERYA *brings in the samovar.*

LUKERYA. [*Placing the samovar on the table*] Lev Rodionych is coming with some people.

TATYANA. I guess some of his relatives; what a horrid nuisance!

AFONYA. Nuisance! Why did you ever intrude into our family?

Enter KRASNOV, KURITSYN, ULYANA.

SCENE II

KRASNOV, TATYANA, LUKERYA, AFONYA, KURITSYN, *and* ULYANA.

KRASNOV. [*To his wife*] How are you? [*Kisses her.*

TATYANA. How affectionate!

KRASNOV. Never mind. We have a perfect right to! Let me treat you. We've just received fresh grapes. [*Gives her a bunch*] Here I have brought you some company. The samovar is all ready—that's good.

ULYANA. How do you do, sister? You are so proud you never call on us! But we're common folks; so we picked ourselves up and came, uninvited.

KURITSYN. How do you do, sister? Why are you so contemptuous of your relatives? You might run over once in a while for tea; your feet are able to carry you!

KRASNOV. How has she time to go visiting? She has so

much to do at home. She's just beginning to get used to the household!

ULYANA. Yes, sister, you must get used to the household. That's our woman's duty. You didn't marry a millionaire, so you needn't put on airs.

KURITSYN. Yes, you'd better learn, and well.

ULYANA. [*Approaching* AFONYA] Ah, Afonya, are you still sick? You ought to take something!

KURITSYN. [*Also approaching* AFONYA] You eat more—then you'll get well. If you don't want to, then force yourself to eat; that's what I tell you!

[*Speaks in a low voice to* AFONYA.

TATYANA. [*To her husband*] What have you done! What sort of company have you brought?

LUKERYA. To be frank, you've spoiled everything. How embarrassing, how awfully embarrassing!

KRASNOV. What, embarrassing? Is some lord coming? What's the odds! Nothing to get excited over! Let him see our relatives.

LUKERYA. Much he's interested!

KRASNOV. I can't chase my sister away for *him*. So there's nothing more to be said about it. I haven't set eyes on him yet, I don't know what he's like; these, at any rate, are our own. And, besides, they'll not stay long. [*To his wife*] Be seated; pour the tea! Brother, sister, have a cup of tea.

All excepting AFONYA *seat themselves at the table.*

KURITSYN. Brother, this is a holiday occasion, so it is customary before tea to—just a little. Don't you drink, yourself?

KRASNOV. From the day I married Tatyana Danilovna I stopped all that. Tatyana Danilovna, treat brother and sister with some vodka.

TATYANA. [*Takes out of the cupboard and places on the table decanter, glasses, and refreshments*] Have some, sister! [ULYANA *drinks*] Have some, brother!

KURITSYN. That's no invitation, you don't know how to do it.

KRASNOV. Brother, don't be quite so particular! My wife doesn't know your common ways, and there's no use knowing them. Please, without ceremony.

KURITSYN. [*After drinking*] You are spoiling your wife, that's what I tell you. Freedom spoils even a good wife. You ought to take example from me, and teach her common sense; that would be lots better. Ask your sister how I trained her; we had a hot time of it.

ULYANA. Yes, you, Manuylo Kalinich, are a terrible barbarian, and a blood-sucker! You spend your whole life bossing your wife and showing your authority.

KURITSYN. What words are those? Who's talking? What's that you say? [*Looking around*] Is any stranger here? Seems to me, my people in my own house don't dare to speak that way!

ULYANA. [*With a start*] I just said that for instance, Manuylo Kalinich. Because, sister, women like us can't live without strict discipline. It's a true proverb: "If you beat your wife, the soup tastes better."

TATYANA. Every one to his own taste! You, sister, like such treatment, while I consider it the height of rudeness.

LUKERYA. Nowadays, such peasant's conduct is discarded everywhere; it's getting out of fashion.

KURITSYN. You lie! Such treatment of women can never get out of fashion, because you can't get along without it. Brother, listen to what point I've brought Ulyana. We used to have disputes among ourselves, among acquaintances or relatives, whose wife was more attentive; I'd bring 'em

to my house, sit on the bench, and push my foot out, so—and say to wife, "What does my foot want?" and she understood because she'd been trained. Of course she at once fell at my feet.

ULYANA. Yes, that's so, that used to happen. I can say that without shame, to everybody.

KRASNOV. There's nothing good in that, just swagger.

KURITSYN. Ah, brother! Beat your overcoat and it will be warmer; beat a wife—she'll be smarter.

TATYANA. Not every wife will allow herself to be beaten, and the one that allows it, isn't worth any other treatment.

ULYANA. Why are you giving yourself such airs all of a sudden, sister? Am I worse than you? You just wait awhile, you'll taste all that. We can clip your wings, too.

KRASNOV. Yes, but be careful.

ULYANA. What are you saying? Married a beggar and you're putting on airs. Do you think that you've married the daughter of a distinguished landowner?

KRASNOV. What I think—is my business, and you can't understand it with your wits. You'd better keep still.

LUKERYA. What an interesting conversation—worth while hearing!

ULYANA. It seems to me she doesn't come from nobles but from government clerks. Not a very great lady! Goats and government clerks are the devil's own kin.

KRASNOV. I told you to keep still! I shouldn't have to tell you ten times. You ought to understand it at once.

KURITSYN. Leave them alone. I like it when the women start a row.

KRASNOV. But I don't like it.

ULYANA. What do I care what you like! I'm not trying to please you. My, how stern you are! You'd better scold your own wife, not me; I'm not under your orders; you

aren't my boss. I have a good husband who can boss me, not you. I'm not to blame because your wife wanders around highways and byways, and flirts with young gentlemen for hours.

KRASNOV. [*Jumping up*] What's that!

TATYANA. I know nothing of highways and byways; I have told you, Lev Rodionych, that I met Valentin Pavlych on the bank, and even everything that we said.

LUKERYA. Yes, I was there with them.

ULYANA. Yes, you're the same sort.

KRASNOV. You're a regular snake in the grass! And you call yourself a sister. What do you want? To make trouble between us? You're spiteful because I love my wife! You may rest assured that I wouldn't change her for anybody. For thirty years I've slaved for my family, labored till I sweated blood, and I thought of marriage only when I'd provided for the whole family. For thirty years I haven't known any pleasures. That's why I have to be thankful to my wife, who has beauty and education, for loving me, a peasant. Formerly I worked for you; now I will work for her forever. I'll perish working, but I'll give her every comfort. I should kiss her feet, because I very well understand that I and my whole household aren't worth her little finger. Do you think after this I will allow her to be abused! I respect her—and you all must respect her!

LUKERYA. Sister herself understands that she deserves all respect.

KRASNOV. What's that you were saying, Ulyana? If you're right, then it's all up with me! See here! I have only one joy, one consolation, and I should have to give it up. Is that easy? Is it? I'm not made of stone that I can look at such wifely doings through my fingers! Your foolish words have entered my ears and wrenched my heart. If I

believed you, then—God keep me from it—I should soon do some violence! One can't vouch for himself as to what may happen. Maybe the devil will jog my elbow. God save us! This is not a joking matter! If you wanted to hurt me, you should have taken a knife and thrust it into my side—that would have been easier for me. After such words it's better that I never see you again, you breaker-up of families. I'd rather disown all my people than endure your poison.

ULYANA. I'm not the cause of separation. It's she that's breaking up families.

KURITSYN. Well, brother! Evidently, if it's the wife's kin—open the door; but if it's the husband's kin—then shut the door. You visit us and we'll show you hospitality. Come, wife, we'd better go home!

ULYANA. Well, good-by, sister, but remember! And you, brother, just wait; we'll settle accounts somehow.

[*They go out.*

SCENE III

KRASNOV, TATYANA, LUKERYA, *and* AFONYA

KRASNOV. [*Approaching his wife*] Tatyana Danilovna, I hope you won't take that to heart, because they're a rough lot.

TATYANA. That's the kind of relatives you have! I lived better beyond comparison as a girl; at least I knew that no one dared to insult me.

LUKERYA. [*Clearing the table*] We didn't associate with the common people.

KRASNOV. And I'll never let you be insulted. You saw I didn't spare my own sister, and drove her out of my house; but if it had been a stranger, he wouldn't have got off alive.

You don't know my character yet; at times I'm afraid of myself.

TATYANA. What, do you become dreadfully furious?

KRASNOV. Not that I'm furious, I'm hot-tempered. I'm beside myself, and don't see people at such times.

TATYANA. How terribly you talk! Why didn't you tell me about your character before? I wouldn't have married you.

KRASNOV. There's nothing bad in a man's being hot-tempered. That means that he's eager in all things, even in his work, and he can love better, because he has more feeling than others.

TATYANA. Now I shall be afraid of you.

KRASNOV. I don't want you to fear me. But I should like to know when you are going to love me?

TATYANA. What sort of love do you want to have from me?

KRASNOV. You know yourself what sort; but maybe you don't feel it. What's to be done? We'll wait, perhaps it'll come later. Everything can happen in this world! There have been cases where love has come the fifth or sixth year after marriage. And what love! Better than if it came at first.

TATYANA. Keep on waiting.

LUKERYA. You're very hot in your love; but we're of entirely different bringing up.

KRASNOV. You speak of bringing up? I'll tell you this, that if I were younger, I'd take up and study for Tatyana Danilovna. I know, myself, what I lack, but now it's too late. I've a soul but no training. If I were trained——

LUKERYA. [*Glancing towards the window*] He's coming, Tanya; he's coming! [*Both run out of the room.*

KRASNOV. Where so suddenly? What are you running after?

LUKERYA. What do you mean? Recollect yourself. We must be courteous and go to meet him. [*They go out.*

AFONYA. Brother! You drove sister away. Whether right or not, let God judge you! But I tell you, you'd better watch the gentleman.

KRASNOV. What the deuce have you got to do with this? You hiss like a snake. You want to wound me. Get out of here! Go, I tell you, or I'll kill you.

AFONYA. Well, kill! My life isn't very sweet to me, and I haven't long to live, anyway. But don't be blind! Don't be blind! [*Goes out.*

KRASNOV. What are they doing to me? Must I really be on my guard, or are they just frightening me? Where then is love! Is it possible, Lord, that I have taken unto me not a joy but a torture! Rouse yourself, Lev Rodionych, rouse yourself. Hearken not to the fiend. You have one joy—he's seizing it, and draining your heart. You will ruin your whole life! You will perish for no cause. All those are slanderous words. They're spiteful because my wife is good, and we get along together—so they begin to stir up trouble. That's clearly seen. It's so in every family. The best way is to drop it and not think about it. The gentleman will have to be gotten rid of; I must see that he never looks our way any more. "Come oftener," I'll tell him, "we like it better when you aren't here." So there'll be less talk and my heart will be calmer.

Enter BABAYEV, TATYANA, *and* LUKERYA.

SCENE IV

BABAYEV, KRASNOV, TATYANA, *and* LUKERYA

BABAYEV. So this is where you live! Is this your own little house?

TATYANA. Our own. This is my husband.

BABAYEV. I'm delighted. I've known your wife a long while.

KRASNOV. That's your affair.

BABAYEV. You're in business?

KRASNOV. That's my affair.

TATYANA. Won't you be seated? [BABAYEV *and* KRASNOV *take seats*] Shouldn't you like some tea?

BABAYEV. No, thank you; I don't care for tea now.

LUKERYA. Ah, Tanya, we've forgotten that now in St. Petersburg they have different tastes. [*To* BABAYEV] We can have coffee immediately.

BABAYEV. No, please do not trouble yourself; I've already had some. Let us rather sit and talk. Are you happy here? Have you any amusements here?

TATYANA. No. What sort of amusements can one have here?

BABAYEV. How do you spend your time? Is it possible you are always at home?

TATYANA. Mostly.

KRASNOV. And that is proper among such as us. Our Russian way is: husband and dog in the yard, and wife and cat in the house.

LUKERYA. [*In a low voice to* KRASNOV] Can't you speak more politely?

KRASNOV. I know my business.

BABAYEV. So you're a housekeeper. I should think it must have been hard for you to get used to your new duties.

TATYANA. [*Glancing at her husband*] Yes; of course I can't say—of course—at first——

BABAYEV. [*To* LUKERYA] I'm asking, but I don't really know myself what these duties consist of.

LUKERYA. But considering your noble birth, that's beneath your knowledge.

KRASNOV. There's nothing vulgar about it.

BABAYEV. Really, what is there vulgar in it?

LUKERYA. The words are low and even quite coarse, and they aren't usually spoken before people of good breeding.

BABAYEV. Well, imagine that I'm a man of no breeding. What are the words, tell me?

LUKERYA. You're embarrassing Tanya and me. But if you're interested to hear those words, all right! The kitchen and other common things belong to the household: the frying-pan, the handle, the oven fork. Isn't that low?

KRASNOV. Whether the oven fork is high or low, if you put the soup in the stove you've got to get it out.

TATYANA. You might spare your wife before guests.

KRASNOV. I haven't insulted you a hair's breadth either before guests or without guests. When you're asked what sort of a housekeeper you are for your husband, right before him, then I should think you'd answer, that you're a good housekeeper, and aren't ashamed of your position, because among such as us that is the first duty.

LUKERYA. [*In a low voice to* KRASNOV] You're disturbing our conversation with our guest.

BABAYEV. [*In a low voice to* TATYANA] Is he always like this?

TATYANA. [*In a low voice*] I don't know what's the matter with him.

BABAYEV. [*In a low voice*] You see for yourself that I've no business here. You'd better come to me to-day, and I'll go home now. [*Aloud*] Well, good-by. I hope this isn't the last time we meet.

LUKERYA. Certainly, certainly.

TATYANA. We are most grateful for your visit!

KRASNOV. [*Bowing*] Good-by to you! Are you going away from here soon?

BABAYEV. I don't know. Whenever my affairs are settled.

KRASNOV. But when, do you think?

BABAYEV. They tell me, at court, the day after to-morrow.

KRASNOV. So, when that's over you're going directly?

BABAYEV. I think so. What is there to do here?

KRASNOV. Yes, there's nothing to do here. My regards to you! [BABAYEV, TATYANA, *and* LUKERYA *go out*] An unbidden guest is worse than a Tatar. What do we want with him? What use is he to us? I won't have his help; we aren't beggars. Well, be off with you! Go to St. Petersburg, and good luck to you.

Enter TATYANA *and* LUKERYA.

SCENE V

KRASNOV, TATYANA, *and* LUKERYA

TATYANA. What are you doing? Why did you go and insult me so?

KRASNOV. There's no insult! Now, look here! We haven't quarrelled once since our wedding, and I hope that we may never do so, but may always live in love.

LUKERYA. Fine love, I must say!

[KRASNOV *looks at her sharply.*

TATYANA. Where is your love? Now we see it very plainly. I must serve your relatives and friends like a cook; but when *our* friend came, a gentleman, then you almost drove him away.

LUKERYA. You did drive him away, only in a roundabout fashion.

TATYANA. You'd better not speak of your love. What do I want with your love when you disgrace me at every step.

KRASNOV. I don't understand the reason for this argument! The whole affair isn't worth discussing. We probably won't ever see him again, and we have no need of him; he went with what he came. We have to live our life together; it isn't worth our having trouble over him.

TATYANA. Ah, Lusha, what a disgrace! I wonder what he'll think of us now?

LUKERYA. Yes. He'll soon go back to St. Petersburg; a fine opinion of us he'll take away with him!

KRASNOV. I tell you again, that you should dismiss him and his opinions from your mind. The whole affair isn't worth a kopek. I think that whether he's alive or no, it's all the same to us.

TATYANA. It may be all the same for you, but not so for us. Sister and I have promised to visit him and we want to go to-day.

KRASNOV. There's no need.

TATYANA. How, no need? I tell you that I want to see him.

KRASNOV. You want to, but I'm not anxious. Ought you to consider my wishes or not?

TATYANA. You seem to have assumed authority all of a sudden. You certainly don't imagine that we'll obey you. —No, indeed, *we won't.*

KRASNOV. [*Striking the table*] What do you mean by "no, indeed"? No, if I tell you something, then that has to go. I'm talking sense and what's good for you, and that's why I give you strict orders. [*Again strikes the table.*

TATYANA. [*Crying*] What tyranny! What torture!

LUKERYA. [*With a laugh*] Oh, what a fearful, oh, what a terrible man, ha, ha, ha!

KRASNOV. What are you cackling about? I'll fire you out so fast that your skirts will squeak on the gate.

TATYANA. Well, do what you like, even kill us, but we'll go. We don't want to show him we're boors. We surely have to thank him for remembering us, and wish him a pleasant journey.

KRASNOV. Tatyana Danilovna, please understand what you are told.

TATYANA. I hope you aren't going to fight? That'll be just like you. That's what's to be expected.

KRASNOV. You're mistaken. You'll never see me do that. I love you so much that this time I'll even respect your caprices. Go along, but never set your foot there again. Only one more thing, Tatyana Danilovna: you see this clock! [*Points to the wall clock*] Look at the clock when you leave, and be back in half an hour! [*Pointing to the floor*] On this very spot. Understand?

TATYANA. Come, Lusha, let's dress. [*Both go out.*

KRASNOV. I think everything will be all right now. They were a little spoiled; in that case sternness will do no harm. If I hold on she'll come to love me. Then when the gentleman is gone, I can humor her again; then our misunderstanding will be forgotten. What wouldn't I give for the half-hour they're with the gentleman? But what's to be done? I can't cut her off sharp—that'd entirely turn her away from me. Whatever I try to think of, horrid things

come into my head. But he certainly isn't a bandit. And then my wife, a little while ago—I'm just an enemy to myself! There surely can't be anything bad; but I think of all sorts of nonsense! I'd better go and have a chat with my friends at the tavern. What did he whisper to her just now? Well, they're old acquaintances; just something! [*Takes his cap*] Tatyana Danilovna! I pined for you until I married you; and now that I have married you, all my heart aches. Don't ruin me, poor lad that I am; it will be a sin for you! [*Goes out.*

TABLEAU II

Same room as in ACT I

SCENE I

KARP *and* PROKOFYEVNA *come in*

PROKOFYEVNA. Is he asleep?

KARP. Don't know. I guess not; he hasn't that habit. It isn't time yet, anyway. What do you think? In St. Petersburg it isn't dinner-time yet, it's still morning.

PROKOFYEVNA. What's that, good heavens!

KARP. Why, at times in the winter, when it's already dusk and the lights are lit everywhere, it's still considered morning.

PROKOFYEVNA. What's the wonder! It's a big city, the capital, not like this. I just came in to see if anything was needed. [*Glancing out of the window*] I believe some one is coming here. I'll go and meet them. [*Goes out.*

KARP. One is bored to extinction here. If he'd grease the palms of the principal men at the court, then they'd have done it in a jiffy. At least we'd now be home, at busi-

ness. I wonder how it is he isn't bored! I wonder if he hasn't found some prey here! He surely doesn't go about town for nothing! I know his ways: he walks and walks past the windows, and casts his eye around for some brunette.

PROKOFYEVNA *comes in.*

PROKOFYEVNA. Go and tell him that he is wanted, my dear sir.

KARP. Why is he wanted?

PROKOFYEVNA. You tell him; he knows why.

KARP. [*Through the door*] Please, sir, you have visitors.

BABAYEV. [*From the door*] Who?

PROKOFYEVNA. Come out, sir, for a minute; you're wanted!

BABAYEV *enters.*

SCENE II

KARP, PROKOFYEVNA, BABAYEV

PROKOFYEVNA. Listen! Tatyana Danilovna, the wife of the shopkeeper, has come with her sister, and wants to know if they may come in.

BABAYEV. Ask them in. I'll tell you what! Listen, landlady! Please avoid gossip! It's possible that she'll come again, so you'll please say that she comes to see you. If any one asks you, you know; the city is small, and every one knows every one else, and every one watches every one else, where each goes, and what each does.

PROKOFYEVNA. Oh, sir! What's that to me! I looked but I didn't see. You're a stranger, not of this place.

BABAYEV. Ask them in! You and I, dear landlady, are old friends. [*Pats her on the shoulder.*

PROKOFYEVNA. Indeed we are, sir, friends! [*Goes out.*

KARP. [*With an impatient wave of his hand*] Sins! [*Goes out.*

TATYANA *and* LUKERYA *come in.*

SCENE III

BABAYEV, TATYANA, LUKERYA

LUKERYA. How do you do, again! Were you looking for us?

BABAYEV. To be frank, I didn't expect you so soon. Be seated; why are you standing? [*They all sit down.*

LUKERYA. We fairly ran over here. We had such a time getting away.

TATYANA. That's enough, Lusha; stop!

LUKERYA. There's no use concealing matters! You can't do it. Valentin Pavlych has seen our local gentry to-day, himself. You should see what a rumpus we had after you left!

TATYANA. Ah, Lusha, those things happen in every family; there's no need telling every one! It's no one's affair how we live.

LUKERYA. Now you understand, Valentin Pavlych, what a peasant is when he assumes importance?

TATYANA. It's well for you to talk, since you aren't concerned. You might spare me! He's my husband, and I have to live with him till the brink of the grave.

BABAYEV. You weren't careful in your marriage, Tatyana Danilovna; you weren't careful.

TATYANA. How queer you are! What are you reproaching me for? Where were you when we had nothing to eat? But now there is no going back. All that remains for me to do is to cry all the rest of my life. [*Cries.*

BABAYEV. Why are you crying now?

TATYANA. What have I to rejoice over? You? I might be happy if I had freedom. Understand this: on your account I quarrelled with my husband; you'll be going away

to-day or to-morrow, while I have to remain with him. You only made matters worse by coming; until you came he didn't seem so bad, and suddenly he has changed entirely. Before he saw you he fulfilled my every wish, he licked my hands like a dog; but now he has begun to look askance at me and to scold. How can I endure torment all my life with the man I loathe! [*Cries.*

BABAYEV. Now, please stop! Why do you grieve! [*To* LUKERYA] Listen, Lukerya Danilovna! You go to the landlady, I can calm her better alone.

LUKERYA. All right, but don't be too sly! [*Goes out.*

SCENE IV

BABAYEV *and* TATYANA

BABAYEV. [*Draws nearer and puts one arm around* TATYANA] Darling, Tanechka, now stop! Why do you weep so! Let's think, together, how we can help your grief.

TATYANA. There's no use thinking! There's no way.

BABAYEV. Is that so? But what if I take you off to the village?

TATYANA. Which one? Where?

BABAYEV. To my own village. There everything is the same as when mother lived: the same lanes, ponds, and arbors; everything is familiar to you, and will remind you of the past. There you'd be my housekeeper.

TATYANA. [*Freeing herself from his arm*] What ideas you do get, my dear sir! How could you get such a foolish notion into your head! Do you think my husband would allow such a thing! Why, he'd find me, at the bottom of the sea!

BABAYEV. For a time we'll be able to hide you so that he

won't find you; and meanwhile we can smooth it over with him.

TATYANA. What! What! That's a bright idea! Stop talking such nonsense! You'd better advise me how to live with my husband the rest of my life.

BABAYEV. Why so! Much I care for that!

TATYANA. So, you don't love me a little bit! You're just making believe! Yes, that's it!

BABAYEV. Tanya, isn't it a sin for you to talk so? Now, tell me, isn't it?

TATYANA. What?

BABAYEV. Isn't it a sin to suspect me?

TATYANA. Oh, you! One can't tell whether you're making believe or not.

BABAYEV. Why should you tell, my angel! Don't worry about me! Just ask your own heart what it tells you!

[*Embraces her.*

TATYANA. But what does yours tell you?

BABAYEV. Yes, but, Tanya, you don't believe me; you say that I'm making believe, and yet you are asking questions. But how could I deceive you?

TATYANA. You aren't a bit interested! You're just talking.

BABAYEV. Don't be afraid; I'll not deceive! Why should I deceive you? [*Leans towards her; she listens with downcast eyes*] I'll tell you what, Tanya! My heart tells me that I have never loved any one as I do you. It's all the same whether you believe me or not. But I will prove that it is the truth, and you yourself will agree with me. Why, I don't tell you that I've never seen women more beautiful than you, or cleverer. Then you might tell me to my face that I lied. No, I have seen more beautiful women than you, and cleverer; but I have never seen such a darling, charming, artless little woman as you.

TATYANA. [*Sighing*] Artless— Ah, you speak the truth.

BABAYEV. Well, I've told you what I feel. Why don't you tell me?

TATYANA. What should I say? I don't know how. I might say more than you. But why say anything—you know yourself.

BABAYEV. That is, possibly, I guess, but——

TATYANA. Why "but"? There's nothing to be said!

BABAYEV. Yes, there is. I guess the secret but I get no good from it. [*Pause*] Tell me yourself that you love me! Well, how about it, Tanya?

TATYANA. What do you want?

BABAYEV. Do you love me? [*Pause*] Do you love me?

TATYANA. [*Dropping her eyes*] Well, yes.

BABAYEV. Very much? [*Pause*] Why are you silent? Do you love me very much?

TATYANA. Yes.

BABAYEV. Will you go to the village with me?

TATYANA. Ah, stop urging me!

BABAYEV. Well, you needn't go to the village then. I know what we'll do: I'll rent a lodging here in the city, and will come here every other week. Do you agree to that?

TATYANA. Yes.

BABAYEV. Now you see, my darling Tanechka, I'm ready to do anything for you.

TATYANA. I see.

BABAYEV. And you? [*Pause*] Why are you silent?

TATYANA. But our compact?

BABAYEV. What compact?

TATYANA. Yesterday's. You remember, on the bank.

BABAYEV. What's there to remember? There wasn't any compact.

TATYANA. Shameless, you're shameless! Can you forget so soon!

BABAYEV. I don't want to know of any compacts.

[*Embraces and kisses her.*

TATYANA. [*Rising*] Oh! Stop, please!

BABAYEV. Why "stop"? What do you mean by "stop"?

TATYANA. I mean, stop.

BABAYEV. What whims!

TATYANA. No whims at all, only please move a little further off.

BABAYEV. If you're going to be so whimsical, then I'll go away. I'll drop the business for which I came and will go away immediately.

TATYANA. Very well, go.

BABAYEV. I'm not joking. Karp! [KARP *comes in*] Pack up and then go order horses.

KARP. Yes, sir.

TATYANA. So that's the way? Well, good luck to you! Good-by! [*Runs out.*

KARP. Well, sir, do you want me to pack up?

BABAYEV. Pack up, for where? You make me tired, man! [*Goes to the window*] I wonder if they've gone home?

KARP. They won't leave.

BABAYEV. That's none of your business! Get out!

KARP *goes out;* LUKERYA *comes in.*

SCENE V

BABAYEV *and* LUKERYA

LUKERYA. Sister has asked me to tell you to put off your going. An acquaintance is visiting the landlady; so you'll understand that it's awkward for her to come to you. But

when she goes away sister will come to you. She has something to talk over with you.

BABAYEV. You're very kind, Lukerya Danilovna!

LUKERYA. I can't believe my ears! Is it possible that I hear such compliments from you! *[Courtesies.*

ACT III

TABLEAU I

Same room as in ACT II

SCENE I

TATYANA *is lying on the bed;* LUKERYA *comes in*

LUKERYA. Tanya, are you asleep?

TATYANA. No.

LUKERYA. Then you'd better get up! What are you lying around for all day? You've been in bed all the morning, and still not up.

TATYANA. What's the use of getting up? What's there to do?

LUKERYA. If you were only asleep—but to lie in bed and cry just rends your heart. Better get up and let's talk it over!

TATYANA. [*Getting up*] Oh, what an unhappy, gloomy day this is! [*Sits down*] How unfortunate I am! What have I done to myself? Why did I marry? I've drowned my happiness, simply drowned it!

LUKERYA. Who could have told? As a suitor he was as quiet as water and as meek as the grass; now I don't know what has happened to him. Why, yesterday I thought he was joking when he told us to be back in a half-hour.

TATYANA. I did, too. If you only had seen how he pounced on me, and how terrible he's become. He looked daggers all the morning, left without saying good-by, and now he hasn't even come back for dinner.

LUKERYA. What did he say to you when you were left alone yesterday?

TATYANA. He scolded and abused, got all wrought up, and wept himself; what didn't he do! "For all my love for you," he said, "I ask you only one thing in return: soothe me, give me back my peace of mind, because I am jealous."

LUKERYA. What an affliction!

TATYANA. He said he wasn't jealous of any one but this gentleman.

LUKERYA. The idea of his being jealous of every one! That would be a great idea!

TATYANA. "When that man leaves," he said, "then you may do anything you like, and go anywhere, but because you didn't heed my command, don't dare cross the threshold until he has left the city for good."

LUKERYA. What did you say to that?

TATYANA. He kept shouting but I kept still through it all; but it hurts me because he lords it over me so. At first he was sly as a fox, but now he has started to order me about, and talk to me in his vulgar, peasant's way. He doesn't care that he has insulted me, but I've been crying all day. I couldn't love him if he killed me. If he gave me freedom, then I might have some affection for him; but now I'll do everything he doesn't want me to, just for meanness; even if I had wronged him, I wouldn't regret it. I must get even with him some way. I can't fight with him; I haven't the strength for that.

LUKERYA. Certainly. He ought to be satisfied that you married him; and now he's got the notion of watching your deportment.

TATYANA. Since yesterday I've begun to fear him so. You won't believe me; why, I shudder when he looks at me.

LUKERYA. What do you think you'll do now?

TATYANA. What's the use of thinking? My head's all in a muddle. It's bad, no matter how you look at it. I sold my very youth to one I cannot love, just for a piece of bread, and from one day to another he becomes more repulsive to me.

LUKERYA. After such actions on his part, it's no wonder he's repulsive. Especially when you compare him with others. The other man is a born gentleman in every sense of the word.

TATYANA. Now what shall I do? If I could break off all connection with Valentin Pavlych, I should be very glad. But I see I should have thought of that before, and attended to the matter earlier; but now it's too late. It's beyond my strength.

LUKERYA. But he loves you very much, Tanya.

TATYANA. Is that so? Oh, bother him. That's just it; at first I haven't enough sense, then I have to cry over it. My mother used to say to me: "Be careful, daughter, your lack of common sense will be your ruin."

LUKERYA. You want to see him, I suppose? I think he's waiting.

TATYANA. Well, of course. If it depended on me, I'd fly to him.

LUKERYA. We'll have to rack our brains how we may work that.

TATYANA. No matter how I rack my brain, I can't think of anything.

LUKERYA. I know what, Tanya! You'll have to fool your husband.

TATYANA. How?

LUKERYA. We women couldn't live without cunning, because we're the weaker sex, and abused on all sides.

TATYANA. But what cunning? Tell me!

LUKERYA. Now that you and your husband live like cats and dogs, he can't help getting the notion into his noddle that you don't love him, but do love another.

TATYANA. How shall I manage?

LUKERYA. You'll have to change your tactics. Be very submissive; peasants like that. Make believe that you're in love with him; give him all sorts of humbug and he'll prick up his ears at it. Flatter him with all sorts of flatteries —that'll be a new thing for him.

TATYANA. I'll have to say what I don't feel.

LUKERYA. Where's the harm in that? How does he know what's in your heart? He doesn't need to understand that your action is make-believe, and not sincere. You'll see, after such actions, he'll believe in you so much that even though you made love before his very eyes, he wouldn't notice it.

TATYANA. One can't make such a sudden change in oneself.

LUKERYA. It certainly must be sudden. What's there to wait for?

TATYANA. He's angry with me now; how can I approach him? I can't beg his pardon!

LUKERYA. Why pardon? [*She thinks*] Do it this way: you tell grandfather Arkhip that you'd like to make up with your husband, so that you'd have no misunderstandings, that you love your husband, and that you feel his displeasure very much.

TATYANA. Well, I'll try.

LUKERYA. It's all the same to me! I'm talking for your own good.

TATYANA. Go and bring grandfather; he's sitting in the garden. [LUKERYA *goes out*] That's what it is for a woman to have wits! Even if she takes a fancy to a man she won't

let anybody guess it. She'll so fool her husband that he'll just dote on her. But without wit one is lost.

LUKERYA *comes in leading* ARKHIP.

SCENE II

TATYANA, LUKERYA, ARKHIP

ARKHIP. Do you need me? What do you want me for? Tatyana, are you here?

TATYANA. Yes, grandfather.

ARKHIP. Lukerya is leading me, and she says: "Grandfather Arkhip, we need you!" What business can you have of me in my old age?

LUKERYA. You see, grandfather, sister is displeased with her husband.

ARKHIP. Well, what of that? Who is the judge between husband and wife? Let them live as they wish.

TATYANA. What happiness is there in living so? It is better to live in harmony.

ARKHIP. Then what's the matter? Live in harmony! Who's preventing you?

LUKERYA. You see, he has a very crude manner, and we're not used to it.

ARKHIP. Wait, don't put in your word. She has a tongue of her own. You tell me, Tatyana.

TATYANA. My husband is now angry with me and doesn't even look at me; he thinks I don't love him, and in that he's mistaken.

LUKERYA. [*Motioning to* TATYANA *to talk*] She's afraid of his temper.

TATYANA. I love him as my duty requires. If he thinks

badly of me, I don't deserve it. Does he think I could betray him for any one else? I would never do such a thing in my life.

LUKERYA. And such a splendid man! Doesn't she realize it?

TATYANA. If I had wronged him in any way, then he might scold, and be done with it. But if he'll only be kind to me, then I'll show him all respect. I'll indulge him as he never dared hope.

LUKERYA. How many times she's told me: "I love my husband very much, very, very much."

ARKHIP. What do you keep backing each other up for? Have you been plotting together?

LUKERYA. Why should I be silent? Is it pleasant for me to see that my sister, whom I adore, lives in such discord with her husband? [*Signals to* TATYANA.

TATYANA. Grandfather Arkhip, I want to ask you to have a talk with my husband——

ARKHIP. Wait! Wait! Give me time—don't take me off my feet! You say that your husband is angry with you? Then you're to blame?

TATYANA. Much I am to blame!

ARKHIP. Much or little, you're certainly to blame. You don't want to humble yourself; you're ashamed to—so you ask me. Is that so?

TATYANA. Yes, grandfather Arkhip.

ARKHIP. Are you speaking sincerely, or just words?

TATYANA. Sincerely, grandfather.

ARKHIP. But what's that to me! It's not my business. If you lie, then you'll answer to God! But I will speak to him. Why not? If you stop quarrelling, then it will be pleasant for all of us.

LUKERYA. You talk to him to-day.

ARKHIP. I'll talk to him when he comes home.

Enter AFONYA.

SCENE III

TATYANA, LUKERYA, ARKHIP, *and* AFONYA

ARKHIP. Who came in?

AFONYA. I, Grandfather Arkhip.

ARKHIP. To-day we have a holiday, Afonya. Tatyana wishes to make peace with her husband, and to submit to him.

AFONYA. Submit? Submit? Don't believe her, Grandfather Arkhip, she's fooling you.

ARKHIP. That's enough from you!

TATYANA. Why should I fool you? What's the use?

AFONYA. You came to your senses when brother frightened you a little. You ought to have done it long ago. If you're in earnest, then drop your proud ways. You ought to bow down to your husband's feet, right to his feet. And to all of us, to all. You have wronged all of us.

LUKERYA. [*In a low voice*] That would be entirely too much honor.

TATYANA. Why should I bow down to my husband?

AFONYA. For everything that he's done for you. I saw myself how he kneeled before you! It's a shame!

[*Covers his face with his hands.*

LUKERYA. What of it, if he wanted to?

AFONYA. He's no worse than you, yet he bowed down to you; now you bow down to him. Make up to him for his humiliation. It won't hurt you! And bow down to all of us, even to our brother-in-law and sister.

TATYANA. Bowing down to my husband has some sense in it, but why should I to you?

AFONYA. Because brother insulted all of us on your account. On account of you our family has been broken up. You're dearer to him than anybody, dearer than all his own.

ARKHIP. Calm yourself! Try to control this fit of anger! We want to make peace, and you are starting a quarrel again.

LUKERYA. He's not even her husband, yet what awful things he says! If you gave him his way, he would make our life unbearable.

ARKHIP. [*Patting* AFONYA *on the head*] What do you expect of him? He's a sick man.

KRASNOV *comes in.*

SCENE IV

KRASNOV, TATYANA, LUKERYA, ARKHIP, *and* AFONYA

LUKERYA. [*In a low voice to* ARKHIP] Lev Rodionych is here.

ARKHIP. Lev, you haven't had any dinner to-day.

KRASNOV. I had no time.

TATYANA. If you wish, we'll serve you now.

KRASNOV. [*Sitting down to the table*] Certainly. I can't get along without eating!

TATYANA. Set the table, sister!

[*Goes to the kitchen.* LUKERYA *sets the table.*

ARKHIP. Lev, are you going back to the shop?

KRASNOV. No, I'm all through there.

ARKHIP. Will you stay at home?

KRASNOV. I'll be here for an hour, then I have to go across the river to make a collection.

TATAYANA *brings a plate of cabbage soup, puts it on*

the table, and goes out with LUKERYA. KRASNOV, *after eating several spoonfuls, is lost in thought.*

ARKHIP. Lev! I can't see you, but it seems as if you weren't happy.

KRASNOV. What's there to be happy about?

ARKHIP. Why are you so sad? What's your sorrow?

KRASNOV. It's my sorrow, grandfather, mine. My very own. It's for me to judge of it.

ARKHIP. Well, as you choose! It's your sorrow, and for you to bear. [*Pause*] If I say anything, you know I'm not your enemy; if you scold me, there's no harm in it. I've lived longer than you, and I've seen more sorrow; maybe what I say will be good for you.

KRASNOV. It isn't the kind of affair, grandfather, that needs advice! You can't tell me anything.

ARKHIP. You're foolish, foolish! How do you know? Are you wiser than the rest of us?

KRASNOV. Please stop. I can't discuss with you. What do you want?

Strikes the spoon against the bowl angrily. LUKERYA *enters, places a bowl of mush on the table, and goes out.*

ARKHIP. Your wife is wiser than you, really wiser.

KRASNOV. If she were wise she'd obey her husband.

ARKHIP. Not necessarily! One can't be on one's guard every minute! Don't you hold anger for every little thing. One wrong—is no wrong; and two wrongs—a half wrong; it takes three wrongs to make a whole wrong.

KRASNOV. What wrongs! All wrongs aren't the same. For some wrongs strangling would be mild.

ARKHIP. What makes you so fierce? Nowadays, they don't hang a man even for highway robbery.

KRASNOV. I can't even eat my food.

ARKHIP. You have a terrible temper! I began to talk about your wife; that wasn't just for the sake of saying something. She came to her senses before you did. [KRASNOV *listens*] "Grandfather Arkhip," says she, "put in a word for me to my husband! I love him," says she, "but I'm afraid of his temper. He seems to think me bad without any reason. I wouldn't exchange him for any one," says she. "I'd try to please him in every way, just so he forgives me and doesn't get angry."

KRASNOV. Is that true?

ARKHIP. Have you gone absolutely crazy? Do you think I'd turn liar in my old age? She'd have told you herself; she wants to bow down to you but, you see, she's ashamed, and then she's afraid.

KRASNOV. [*Rising*] Grandfather Arkhip, understand me! You know how I love her, there's no need telling! Until this happened, we lived together very comfortably; you all saw how I simply doted on her. Now that this gentleman has come I see that he talks in too free and easy a way with her; and that made me angry. Would you believe me, I didn't know what I was doing or saying. When she went to him, I waited half an hour—she didn't return; I waited an hour—she didn't return; I became furious; my very teeth began to chatter. Here I was imagining all sorts of things! Maybe I'm doing her wrong, am unjust to her; maybe she meant nothing; but what was there to do? I'm consumed with a fire, absolutely consumed. I wronged her, I admit; but was it easy for me? If you'd told me that she'd just died—I don't know what I'd do with myself, but it would be easier; then no one could take her from me. [*Weeps*] Some want money or reputation, but I need nothing except her love. Give me the choice: Here, Krasnov, you

can have gold-mines and royal castles, if you'll only give up your wife; or here, you can have a roofless mud hut, all sorts of hard work, but you may live with your wife. I won't utter a sound. I'll carry water on my back, just to be with her always. So listen, grandfather! Is it strange that with my hot temper I hurt her? If there's no love, then there's no anger. But you tell me that she herself wants to bow down to me! Such happiness can't come to me even in a dream. Certainly that is a load off my shoulders. It seems as though I'd just been born into the world! Thank you, grandfather Arkhip! I was a dead man and you brought me to life again! I had such thoughts in my head that I can't make up for them by praying all my life. The devil was surely near me. Not only did he whisper in my ear, but—it's a sin to say it—[*in a low voice*] he might have made me raise my arm.

ARKHIP. What! At whom?

KRASNOV. Well, what's past is past. God preserve me from such torment in the future! I wouldn't wish such for my enemy.

ARKHIP. You'd better calm your heart!

KRASNOV. Ah, grandfather! I'd be glad to, but one can't restrain oneself. All at once your eyes become clouded, your head whirls, it seems as if some one were gripping your heart with his hand and you can think only of misfortune and sin. You walk about as if half crazed, and see nothing all around you. But now when your anger has calmed down, then you're at ease, as if nothing had happened. [LUKERYA *comes in and takes the bowl from the table*] Where's Tatyana Danilovna?

LUKERYA. She's there, in the kitchen.

KRASNOV. Why in the kitchen? What is she doing there? The kitchen is no place for her to sit in! Call her in here.

LUKERYA *goes out.*

AFONYA. [*In a low voice to* ARKHIP] Grandfather, will she bow down to brother's feet or not? If not, then I'll leave.

ARKHIP. As they please, that's not our business!

Enter TATYANA *and* LUKERYA.

SCENE V

KRASNOV, TATYANA, LUKERYA, ARKHIP, *and* AFONYA

TATYANA. Did you call me?

KRASNOV. Yes, because the kitchen is no fit place for you to sit in.

ARKHIP. I have spoken to him, Tatyana; now do as you like yourself.

TATYANA. Lev Rodionych! If I've done you any wrong whatever, please pardon me. If you wish it, I'll bow down to your feet.

KRASNOV. No, why should you? I can feel it without your doing that. I could never allow you to do that—to bow down before me! What kind of man would I be then?

TATYANA. I'm willing to do anything, only do not be angry with me.

KRASNOV. I need nothing but your word. You gave your word—that's enough; it's my duty to believe you.

TATYANA. Then you're not angry with me?

KRASNOV. Not at all! I'm not a man of polished manners; in my excitement I stormed—but don't take it ill of me; I did it because I was fond of you.

LUKERYA. Oh, stop! Who could take it ill of you?

TATYANA. I've already forgotten it. Your words didn't hurt me so much as that you didn't even look at me to-day.

ARKHIP. Well, now they've made up! What's the use of thrashing over old scandals! Now kiss, as you should. Now everything will go on as it ought.

TATYANA. We won't fuss over that, grandfather. I'll be very glad to. I wanted to long ago, but I didn't know how it would please Lev Rodionych.

KRASNOV. If it's a pleasure to you, it's a double one for me! [*They kiss each other.*

LUKERYA. I've always marvelled, Lev Rodionych, to see how sister loves you.

KRASNOV. What's there to marvel at?

LUKERYA. I know her, Lev Rodionych, better than you do. She's of a quiet temperament and can't tell you everything; but you just ought to know what her real feelings are.

KRASNOV. That makes it more pleasant still.

LUKERYA. She would have liked to tell you how much she loved you; but she's so timid that she can't.

KRASNOV. [*To his wife*] Why are you timid with me? I'm only an ordinary man.

LUKERYA. We are so naturally.

KRASNOV. [*To his wife*] Then be kind enough not to be afraid of me in the future. That would trouble my conscience. Am I a bogie?

TATYANA. I'll not be afraid of you any more, Lev Rodionych; I'll love you.

LUKERYA. Other women would make you all sorts of promises that they didn't mean a bit, but my sister—she's different.

KRASNOV. Now I can understand you. There were times when I didn't know just how to approach you—whether you'd be pleased or not!

TATYANA. You always please me.

AFONYA. Come, Grandfather Arkhip, let's go out on the street!

ARKHIP. As you wish; come on! Now, thank God, we again have peace and love. It's good when there's agreement

in the house! It's good, children, good! [*Going out*] The demon has vanished under the earth, and God walks on the earth! [*Goes out.*

LUKERYA. I just looked in here and now I must go somewhere else. [*Goes out.*

SCENE VI

KRASNOV *and* TATYANA

KRASNOV. [*Sitting down on the bench*] Ah, Tatyana Danilovna, if God would only grant that we might live our entire lives in such harmony as now!

TATYANA. [*Sitting down beside him*] We will.

KRASNOV. If you were always so kind, you could fairly twist me round your finger. You can do anything with me by kindness, Tatyana Danilovna.

TATYANA. [*Placing her hand on his shoulder*] I don't need anything from you; I'm satisfied with everything. But don't think ill of me. Why were you so jealous?

KRASNOV. [*Embracing her*] So you were offended! [*Looking at her lovingly*] You're my dear! Whatever is dear to one he guards. Why, you're dearer to me than everything in the world! What a wife you are! Who else has such a one? You're the envy of the whole city—don't I see that? Who would want to lose such a wife? In the first place, it's just like tearing a piece out of his heart; and secondly with their taunts and reproaches they would give me no peace, drive me wild. I must tell you, I love you more than my soul, and I had no intention of abusing you, but—how can I explain it?—I can't help having notions.

TATYANA. Don't have them.

KRASNOV. That's all over now.

TATYANA. [*Kindly*] Don't you insult me by watching me!

KRASNOV. I tell you that's all past! Give me a good hard kiss! [*They kiss each other*] That's right! Now tell me why you love me? How can you be so attached to me?

TATYANA. I just love you, that's all.

KRASNOV. No, do tell me! It does me good to hear it from you. I want to know what there is in me that could make such a beauty fall in love with me. Did I please you by my wit or by something else?

TATYANA. By everything. Who could say anything bad of you? Everybody knows you're a good man.

KRASNOV. And what else?

TATYANA. You're very kind, and you don't begrudge me anything.

KRASNOV. That's the talk! [*Embraces her fervently and kisses her*] Well, love me still more and then I'll be still kinder. What are you frowning at? Did I muss you a little?

TATYANA. You're holding me too tight.

KRASNOV. Oh, for the Lord's sake! I just can't help it! I squeeze you the way I love you. It's right from the heart, no humbug. I don't suppose you're made of sugar; you won't fall to pieces.

TATYANA. That's all right.

KRASNOV. I know you didn't mean anything. What's there to complain of! No need to get angry at such treatment! Isn't that so?

TATYANA. You know yourself, why ask!

KRASNOV. Such is life with a good woman! Peaches and cream! Simply lovely! Nothing on earth is better! What is the reason that you're so precious to us men?

TATYANA. I don't know.

KRASNOV. It's the work of Providence—truly, of Providence! It's beyond our understanding! We know one thing, that—if you're attached to your wife, that's enough.

If you're once attached, then that's all. Now that we're friends, the house might burn down over my head. [*Kisses her*] To-day I'll go and collect some money, and to-morrow I'll buy you a new outfit.

TATYANA. What for? You don't need to.

KRASNOV. If I say I'll buy it, then that's my affair. So I *do* need to buy it. You attend to your business; comfort your husband! And I'll attend to mine. [*Looking at his watch*] Oh, there's lots of time! I'd better go! I wish I didn't have to leave you.

TATYANA. Don't go!

KRASNOV. Don't you really want me to go? Don't act spoiled! Business before pleasure! If I don't make the collection to-day, I can't get my money for a whole week. It's so far to go, too! I wish he'd— Why, it's on the other side of the river! It'll take an hour; confound him! [*Takes his cap*] So you don't want me to go?

TATYANA. Of course not!

KRASNOV. Oh, what a woman you are! [*Embraces her*] I know your kind, and very well too! You just wait for me an hour, you'll live through it! [*Kisses her*] Good-by! Otherwise I'd really be bound to stay with you. You women were created for man's temptation in this world! [*Starts off.*

TATYANA. Come back soon!

KRASNOV. I'll be back 'fore you can count ten! Speaking seriously, I can't return within an hour. [*He goes out.*

SCENE VII

TATYANA *alone*

TATYANA. [*As soon as her husband goes*] Well, good-by! At last he's gone! I'm unfortunate, unfortunate! They say one ought to love one's husband; but how can I love

him? He's vulgar, uneducated—and he fondles me as a bear would! Sits there—and swaggers like a peasant; and I have to pretend to love him, to humor him; how disgusting! I'd give anything on earth not to have to do that. But how can I help it! I have to submit to one I don't love! [*Silence*] I wonder where everybody is? Here I am all alone! Such loneliness! [*Sits down at the window*] Even the streets are deserted, and there's no one to look at. Where's my sister? [*Sings softly.*

"O, mother I'm sad!
Sad, my lady!
My heart is cast down,
Cast down and aching;
My belovèd knows not
How my heart is bleeding."

SCENE VIII

TATYANA *and* LUKERYA

LUKERYA. What, is he gone?

TATYANA. Yes.

LUKERYA. Far?

TATYANA. Across the river.

LUKERYA. Will he be long?

TATYANA. He said, not sooner than an hour.

LUKERYA. Now you might run over. I was just there—he's waiting. He leaves to-day.

TATYANA. Surely not to-day? How can that be, Lusha, my dear? He didn't tell me. If I could only see him!

LUKERYA. Take my kerchief and cover yourself all up with it. It's so dark outside that no one will know you.

TATYANA. You think it'll be all right?

LUKERYA. If you're afraid of the wolf don't go into the woods. It isn't far, you can run over in a minute. But don't stay too long!

TATYANA. No, no, of course I shan't. [*Puts the kerchief on.*

LUKERYA. You'd better be watching out! God forbid that Lev Rodionych should return first. What should I do then! Shall I say that you went for some thread to a neighbor? It'll be lucky if he believes it. What did you say to him when you were alone?

TATYANA. What did I say—I don't know; and what I'm doing now—I can't understand.

LUKERYA. Well, run along! run along!

TATYANA *goes out.*

SCENE IX

LUKERYA *and later* AFONYA

LUKERYA. [*At the window*] Just look at her! She's flying like an arrow. Who'd scheme for her if I didn't? She's a pretty girl, only she hasn't any sense, and that's bad. She has to be taught everything; she has to be looked after as though she were a small child. If I hadn't advised her to make up with her husband, what would have happened? Quarrel and abuse. She probably wouldn't have wanted to give in; then there'd have been a continual squabble in the house and scandal among the neighbors. But now she can do as she likes; everything will be smoothed over.

Enter AFONYA.

AFONYA. Where is Tatyana? Where is she, where is she?

LUKERYA. What do you want her for?

AFONYA. I need her. Tell me, where? Tell me, where?

LUKERYA. Probably in the garden.

AFONYA. Why are you fooling me? For once in your life tell the truth! Has she gone? Speak, has she gone?

LUKERYA. Maybe she *has* gone.

AFONYA. Did she just slip out of the gate?

LUKERYA. Probably it was she. Wasn't it for thread she went? She's been wanting to run over to the neighbor's for some time.

AFONYA. For thread?

LUKERYA. Well, yes, for thread.

AFONYA. You lie, lie!

LUKERYA. Leave me alone! Why are you worrying me? Why did you leave grandfather?

AFONYA. That's none of your business. I know where she went. You're devils. You've deceived brother. I saw it long ago in your eyes; in your eyes flames flickered, devilish flames!

LUKERYA. My, but you're a malicious imp!

AFONYA. You just wait, just wait! You'll get sick of deceiving us; I'll show you up.

LUKERYA. Don't threaten! We're not afraid of you.

AFONYA. [*With tears*] Heavens! My God! What's all this? What a man it is they're deceiving before his very eyes! [*Runs out.*

ACT IV

TABLEAU I

A street before PROKOFYEVNA'S *house. Twilight*

SCENE I

ULYANA *and* PROKOFYEVNA *come out of the gate*

PROKOFYEVNA. What is it, Ulyana! What is it! How is it possible! Don't think of such a thing! You just imagined it. Believe me, you just imagined it.

ULYANA. Say what you like about imagining! Thank Heaven, I'm not blind yet. Not to recognize her! Why, I'd pick her out of a thousand by her dress. We have only one style for our clothes; on holidays we don't wear the clothes she does on week-days. You and I were just coming out of the door, and she was just going in to see him.

PROKOFYEVNA. I tell you it's a mistake. It's true, she isn't without faults. There's a woman here who comes to him, and looks like her, but it isn't she. What's that to me! Wouldn't I tell you? But if it isn't true, then why talk nonsense?

ULYANA. You're just helping them out.

PROKOFYEVNA. Don't tell wrong stories, Ulyana; don't tell wrong stories!

ULYANA. But where's the wrong, Prokofyevna! She's equal to it; because I know her. It's too bad brother has given her so much freedom. I wouldn't have thought of saying such a thing of another, but it isn't a sin to say it of her. If not to-day then to-morrow she'll begin to raise

trouble that will never come to an end. She'll hoodwink brother. If you only knew how she's insulted me.

PROKOFYEVNA. Is that so?

ULYANA. May I die in my tracks if she didn't! She's changed brother so that now he fairly growls at me. "I won't have anything to do with you," says he. That's the sort she is! Just you wait, my dear! I'm not like some.

PROKOFYEVNA. That's enough for you! What's the good of your mixing in! She's the mistress in her house, and you are in yours.

ULYANA. To the deuce with her! I've nothing to do with her. But it hurts me, Prokofyevna, that she upsets brother, and estranges him from his whole family.

PROKOFYEVNA. Well, that's your business; you'll settle accounts somehow. Are you going home now?

ULYANA. Yes, my dear; it's supper-time. My boss is probably storming and pacing the floor by now. Come and see us!

PROKOFYEVNA. Good-by.

They kiss each other. PROKOFYEVNA *goes out through the gate.*

SCENE II

ULYANA *and later* AFONYA

ULYANA. Who knows whether Prokofyevna was lying or not. You can't believe her; she's a rogue. I'd give a lot to find out for certain if she's now with the gentleman or not. Will it hurt to wait? If she stays long, my husband will make such a fuss that I won't forget it for a month of Sundays. You're lucky that I'm in a hurry, or I'd watch out for you. [*Goes out. She meets* AFONYA] Afonya, where are you going?

AFONYA. Go away, leave me alone! Leave me alone!

ULYANA. Is Tatyana at home?

AFONYA. No, she's gone.

ULYANA. Then she's here at the gentleman's; I just saw her.

AFONYA. At the gentleman's? Heavens! Have people no sense of shame!

ULYANA. I've got to run home; I'll tell my husband, then I'll call at your house. [*Going away*] Wait, brother, wait! I'll get even with you for your insults! [*Goes out.*

AFONYA. Heavens! I haven't any strength! How is one to live in such a world? This is a punishment for our sins! Left her husband for a stranger! She was sitting in a corner starving; we took care of her, gave her fine clothes bought with hard-earned money! Brother denies himself, denies his family, and gives her cash to buy rags, and now she and a stranger are cursing us for the shelter we gave her. It makes me sick! Why don't I die! I'm shedding tears of blood. We've warmed a viper in our bosom. [*Leans against the fence*] I'll wait, I'll wait. I'll tell her everything, everything that's seething in my heart.

BABAYEV *and* TATYANA *come out of the gate;* AFONYA *hides behind a corner.*

SCENE III

AFONYA, BABAYEV, *and* TATYANA

BABAYEV. What are you afraid of? There's not a soul on the street. Why are you in such a hurry? It isn't half an hour since you came.

TATYANA. No, no! Somehow I feel uneasy.

BABAYEV. I don't understand why you are so afraid. Well, your husband will scold and that's all.

TATYANA. I was late the time before; how terribly he acted; I thought he'd kill me. He makes me afraid, frightfully afraid! [*Silence*] Shall you return soon?

BABAYEV. In a week, in ten days at most.

TATYANA. Oh, how has this come about! Oh, if we had what we wanted: you'd go to the country—and I'd go there too; you'd go to St. Petersburg—and I'd follow you.

BABAYEV. I asked you to come with me.

TATYANA. It's all right for you. You're a free man, while I'm no better than a captive. That's my trouble. I've thought more than once how I could run away to you.

BABAYEV. That's good.

TATYANA. Just think how unfortunate my life is: in order to have a little pleasure I have to deceive my husband. It's all deceit and deceit! But what's the use of deceiving? It disgusts me; it's not in my character. If my husband guessed that I didn't love him, then he'd kill me with scolding and reproaches. I very well understand that I can't be a real wife to him, and that I'm not wanted by his family; and they'd rather I were anywhere else; but who can I explain that to, who'd understand it! Just see how rough and stern they are, and I'm not used to sternness. What a life, when there's no freedom!

BABAYEV. Tanya, I'll tell you what to do! Tell him outright that you don't want to live with him. You and your sister rent a house, and I'll send you the money.

TATYANA. That's impossible. Not to be thought of! Do you think he'd let me go? He doesn't care if I die—so long as I'm with him—before his eyes. It would be better for me to leave quietly.

BABAYEV. Very well, leave quietly.

TATYANA. Really, I don't know. We're all brave when it's a matter of words, but when it comes to action, then

you lose your reason, especially such as I. Do as you wish. I'll do as you advise me. If you love me, you won't want to cause my ruin.

BABAYEV. Of course not.

TATYANA. They're right when they say that all women are insane; I married of my own accord—nobody forced me—so now I ought to live according to my vows; but I'm drawn to you, and want to escape from my home. It's all your fault, Valentin Pavlych; home has become disgusting to me because of you. If it weren't for you, I'd manage to live somehow with my husband; at least I shouldn't know this sorrow.

BABAYEV. A fine life! You have much to regret!

TATYANA. But is my life agreeable now? Of course I ought not to blame you much, because I'm entirely to blame myself. You have nothing to worry about! Yours is a man's affair, and no one will condemn you; but we have to suffer for every single thing. But what's to be done! It's too late to argue who's in the right and who's to blame; but I guess this affair had to happen. But don't you deceive me; come back!

BABAYEV. Oh, stop; what do you mean! Certainly I'll come back.

TATYANA. [*Kissing him*] Good-by! It's time for me to go! My, how I'm shivering! My legs fairly totter under me.

BABAYEV. Calm yourself a little. Come, I'll walk along the bank with you; you'll get home in time. [*They go out.*

AFONYA. So this, brother Lev, is what you deserted us for! Just look, and enjoy it! You act like a wild beast to those who love you with their whole soul. I'm burning up like a candle, I'm wasting away because of love and pity for you, and yet I haven't once heard a kind word from you.

You doted on your wife, and see what she's up to, the wretch! No, there's no truth in the world, none. [*Goes out.*

TABLEAU II

Same room as in ACT III

SCENE I

LUKERYA *enters with a candle and places it on a table; later* AFONYA *comes in.*

LUKERYA. Why doesn't Tanya return! It's high time. She's insane! She's just glad that she got out of here; she doesn't realize that suddenly, when you least expect it, her husband may return. Here I am on pins and needles. When I hear any one at the door my heart almost stops. Every minute seems a year. Afonya torments me too. I wonder where he went. Isn't he spying on her? Of course I can find ten replies to every word he says; yet he may rouse suspicion. Ah, some one is coming! Is it possible that it's Lev! Heaven forbid! I do believe I'll die. [AFONYA *comes in, and, groaning, lies down on the stove-couch*] Where have you been?

AFONYA. Never you mind.

LUKERYA. Speak, it won't hurt your voice.

AFONYA. I don't want to talk to you.

LUKERYA. [*Caressingly*] Don't you feel well, Afonya?

AFONYA. Oh, Heavens! don't touch me, don't touch! You can't fool me.

LUKERYA. I don't in the least wish to fool you.

AFONYA. You fooled brother, but you can't fool me. No, no!

LUKERYA. I don't understand a bit what you're talking about.

AFONYA. Oh, I'm exhausted! Go away: out of my sight. Don't torment me.

LUKERYA. You feel worse because you don't appreciate kindness.

AFONYA. I don't need it! I don't need anything.

LUKERYA. Well, then just lie on your couch. Do you think I want anything from you? I only spoke out of sympathy. [*Silence*] What a senseless girl; how senseless! I'm all a-tremble.

KRASNOV *comes in.*

SCENE II

The same and KRASNOV

KRASNOV. Well, here I am. What a trick I've played! The joke's on Tatyana Danilovna. "Expect me in an hour," I said, and here I am in half an hour, so she'd be surprised. I was invited to tea, but I didn't stay. "Do you think I want tea," I said, "when I have a young wife at home who's waiting for me!" But where is she?

LUKERYA. I don't know. Somewhere around. Isn't she in the garden?

KRASNOV. Send her in right away, I want to give her a present for her kindness to-day.

LUKERYA. Right away, right away. [*Goes out.*

KRASNOV. [*Paces up and down in silence; then speaks to himself*] Fifty-seven rubles, six and three, nine to Peter Ananyev. [*Pause*] Has she disappeared? [*Paces up and down in silence*] Afonya, do you know where my wife went?

AFONYA. Don't know. Oh, I feel sick.

KRASNOV. What's she dallying around for? [*Goes to the*

door] Tatyana Danilovna! Lukerya Danilovna! They don't even answer. What does that mean now? Afanasy, where's my wife?

AFONYA. Are you lonesome without her? She'll come, don't be afraid. No matter where she's strolling, she'll come home.

KRASNOV. [*At the door*] Tatyana Danilovna!

ULYANA *comes in.*

SCENE III

The same and ULYANA

KRASNOV. Who's that? Is that you, Ulyana?

ULYANA. Yes, brother.

KRASNOV. What do you want?

ULYANA. Just to call on you, brother, as a relative should.

KRASNOV. I'm in no great need of your calls.

ULYANA. My feelings, brother, are different from yours; I can't help remembering my kindred. Where's your bride?

KRASNOV. She seems to have gotten lost somewhere here. I keep calling her, but can't raise her.

ULYANA. Maybe she's far away from here, so she can't hear your call.

KRASNOV. What do you mean by "far"? I tell you she's at home.

ULYANA. Who said that? Wasn't it her sister, Lukerya Danilovna?

KRASNOV. Yes, maybe it was she.

ULYANA. And you believed her. Oh, you're simple, simple!

KRASNOV. Go away, sister! Keep out of trouble!

ULYANA. Come to your senses; what are you shouting for? I saw with my own eyes how she went to the gentleman.

KRASNOV. So that's the kind of family I have! My luck

sticks in their throats. You're a barbarian, you jealous woman. To kill you would be small penalty for your cursed tongue! [*Raises his arm to strike her.*

AFONYA. [*Getting up from the couch*] Quieter, you; quieter! What are you making a row for?

KRASNOV. I'll hang you both on the same poplar!

AFONYA. [*Shielding his sister*] Don't touch her, don't lay a finger on her! She's telling the truth, the absolute truth.

KRASNOV. You lie, you're jealous, both of you! It isn't an hour, I tell you; it isn't an hour since we sat here, kissing and embracing, looking into each other's eyes and couldn't get enough of it.

ULYANA. Heavens, he's out of his head! You've lost your mind! Go and see for yourself if you don't believe us.

KRASNOV. [*At the door*] Lukerya Danilovna!

ULYANA. Call, call; she ran over there, too.

Enter KURITSYN.

SCENE IV

The same and KURITSYN

KURITSYN. What are you yelling for, are you teaching your wife? That's good for her, so she won't run away from home.

KRASNOV. But where is she? Where is she? Spare me; you're tearing me to pieces.

KURITSYN. She'll come back; she doesn't spend the night there.

ULYANA. You'd better calm yourself, brother; sit down.

KURITSYN. We'll all wait for her, the lady.

KRASNOV. She petted me, fondled me, pressed me close to her heart.

TATYANA *enters quietly and looks around.*

SCENE V

The same and TATYANA

KRASNOV. Where have you been? Have you had a good time? Speak, don't hide it! Why are you silent? Speak! You see: everybody has come to view my shame.

ULYANA. Why don't you talk, you shameless creature! You think you can get out of it by silence? We saw how you went over there and came back.

KURITSYN. Trample on her, brother, trample on her hard; she'll talk.

KRASNOV. Don't torment me! Tell me, what am I to think of you? What? Are these people lying? Then I'll turn 'em out, head over heels! Or maybe they're telling the truth? Deliver me from my sinful thoughts! Tell me, which of you is my enemy? *Were* you there?

TATYANA. What's the use of lying, since you've all seen me. I was there.

KRASNOV. [*Beside himself*] There, good people, there—that's how it is! What shall I do now? What can I—pardon me, a sinner, for doing you wrong! How other men's wives behave, I don't know; but this is the way in our family.

ULYANA. Now we'll watch your pride. How will you show yourself among people now, shameless woman? You've disgraced our brother, disgraced him!

AFONYA. Viper, viper!

KURITSYN. What's the use of looking at her! She ought to pay the penalty right off.

ARKHIP *comes in.*

SCENE VI

The same and ARKHIP

ARKHIP. What punishment has God sent us? Why so much noise? Is there a fire? You know I can't see.

ULYANA. The sweet bride has been up to mischief! If I were in brother's place, I'd take her and crush her.

KRASNOV. Away, away! Don't, don't anybody lay a finger on her! I'm her husband, so I'm her judge. Now tell me, why did you do it? Why did you go astray? Were you drawn into the net of sin? Perhaps you didn't dream of such a thing of your own accord. Perhaps you didn't expect it? Or did you rush into sin of your own free will? How about you now? Do you repent or not? Or maybe you think that was the right thing to do? Speak! Why are you silent? Are you abashed before people, or are you happy? Are you ashamed, or are you glad of what you've done? Are you made of stone? Roll at every one's feet, crucify yourself! Or will you tell me outright that you did it to spite me! I want to know what to do with you—spare you, or kill you. Did you love me at least a little bit; is there any reason for my sparing you? Or did you cheat me all the time? Did I only dream of happy days?

TATYANA. [*With tears*] I'm guilty, Lev Rodionych. I deceived you. I never loved you, and don't love you now. You'd better leave me, rather than have both of us suffer. Better that we part!

KRASNOV. How part? Where shall we go? No, you lie! Whom shall I punish for my shame? You say you don't love me, and never did, while I went around town and boasted that a beautiful lady loved me. How shall I take revenge for this insult? Go in the kitchen! You can't be

a wife, so be a cook! You couldn't walk hand in hand with your husband, so fetch water for him. You have aged me in a day, and now I'll make sport of your beauty! Every day that the fair sun rises, you'll get nothing from me but slaps and curses all your life; maybe some time when I'm angry, I'll kill you like a dog. Some one give me a knife!

TATYANA *runs out.*

AFONYA. Brother! brother! She's going, she's going away.

KRASNOV. She won't escape me!

AFONYA. She's going to the gentleman. I heard them planning to go away to the country.

KRASNOV. Who'll take her from me, if I won't give her up? Who in the whole world is strong enough to take her from me? If they take her they'll have to tear my arms off.

AFONYA. [*Looking out of the door*] Brother, she's getting ready! She's leaving, brother!

KRASNOV. [*Pushing him aside*] Stand aside! A woman leaves her husband only for the grave, for nowhere else! [*Goes out. The cry of* TATYANA *is heard:* "Let me go!" *He comes back*] Bind me! I've killed her.

AFONYA. Serves her right.

ULYANA. Ah, my dear! What will happen to you now?

ARKHIP. Where is he? Where is he? [AFONYA *leads him*] What have you done? Who gave you the right? Is she guilty only towards you? First of all, she is guilty before God; and you, a proud and wilful man, have taken it upon yourself to judge? You couldn't wait for the merciful judgment of God; so now go to the judgment of man, yourself! Bind him!

KURITSYN. He didn't expect it, he didn't foresee it, but he fell into sorrow! Sorrow walks not through the woods, but among men.

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR—WE'LL SETTLE IT OURSELVES

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

CHARACTERS

Samsón Sílych Bolshóv,[1] *a merchant*
Agraféna Kondrátyevna, *his wife*
Olimpiáda Samsónovna (Lípochka), *their daughter*
Lázar Elizárych Podkhalyúzin,[2] *a clerk*
Ustínya Naúmovna, *a professional match-maker*
Sysóy Psóich Rispolózhensky,[3] *a lawyer*
Fomínishna, *housekeeper* } *in* Bolshóv's *house*
Tíshka,[4] *boy* }

[1] Samson Strengthson Bigman.
[2] Sneaky.
[3] Unfrocked.
[4] A nickname for Tíkhon.

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR—WE'LL SETTLE IT OURSELVES

ACT I

Drawing-room in BOLSHOV'S *house*

SCENE I

LIPOCHKA *is sitting near the window with a book*

LIPOCHKA. What a pleasant occupation these dances are! Very good indeed! What could be more delightful? You go to the assembly, or to somebody's wedding, you sit down, naturally, all beflowered like a doll or a magazine picture. Suddenly up runs a gentleman: "May I have the happiness, miss?" Well, you see, if he's a man of wit, or a military individual, you accept, drop your eyes a little, and answer: "If you please, with pleasure!" Ah! [*Warmly*] Most fasci-nat-ing! Simply beyond understanding! [*Sighs*] I dislike most of all dancing with students and government office clerks. But it's the real thing to dance with army men! Ah, charming! ravishing! Their mustaches, and epaulets, and uniforms, and on some of them even spurs with little bits of bells. Only it's killingly tiresome that they don't wear a sabre. Why do they take it off? It's strange, plague take it! The soldiers themselves don't understand how much more fascinatingly they'd shine! If they were to take a look at the spurs, the way they tinkle, especially if a uhlan or some colonel or other is showing off—wonderful! It's just splendid to look at them—lovely! And if he'd just

fasten on a sabre, you'd simply never see anything more delightful, you'd just hear rolling thunder instead of the music. Now, what comparison can there be between a soldier and a civilian? A soldier! Why, you can see right off his cleverness and everything. But what does a civilian amount to? Just a dummy. [*Silence*] I wonder why it is that so many ladies sit down with their feet under their chairs. There's positively no difficulty in learning how! Although I was a little bashful before the teacher, I learned how to do it perfectly in twenty lessons. Why not learn how to dance? It's only a superstition not to. Here mamma sometimes gets angry because the teacher is always grabbing at my knees. All that comes from lack of education. What of it? He's a dancing-master and not somebody else. [*Reflecting*] I picture to myself: suddenly a soldier makes advances to me, suddenly a solemn betrothal, candles burn everywhere, the butlers enter, wearing white gloves; I, naturally, in a tulle or perhaps in a gauze gown; then suddenly they begin to play a waltz—but how confused I shall be before him! Ah, what a shame! Then where in the world shall I hide? What will he think? "Here," he'll say, "an uneducated little fool!" But, no, how can that be! Only, you see I haven't danced for a year and a half! I'll try it now at leisure. [*Waltzing badly*] One—two—three; one—two—three——

SCENE II

LIPOCHKA *and* AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. [*Entering*] Ah, ha, shameless creature! My heart told me so; before it's fairly daylight, before you've eaten God's bread, you start off dancing right away!

LIPOCHKA. Now, mamma, I've drunk my tea and eaten

some curd-cakes. Look here, is this all right? One, two, three; one—two——

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. [*Following her*] What difference does it make if you have had something to eat? I suppose I'll have to keep watching what sinful pranks you're up to! I tell you, don't whirl around!

LIPOCHKA. Pooh! where's the sin in that! Everybody's doing it nowadays. One, two——

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Better knock your forehead against the table, but don't fiddle around with your feet. [*She runs after her*] What's the matter with you? Where did you get the idea of not obeying?

LIPOCHKA. Who told you I didn't obey? Don't meddle; let me finish the way I want to! One, two, three——

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Shall I have to run after you long, old woman as I am? Ouf! You've worn me out, you barbarian! Do you hear? Stop! I'll complain to your father!

LIPOCHKA. Right away, right away, mamma! This is the last time around! God created you expressly for complaining. Much I care for you! One—two——

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What! you keep on dancing, and talk impudently into the bargain! Stop it this minute! It'll be so much the worse for you; I'll grab you by the skirt, and tear off the whole train.

LIPOCHKA. Well, tear it, and much good may it do you! You'll simply have to sew it up again, and that's all there is to it! [*She sits down*] Phew! phew! my, I'm soaked through! as if I'd been pulling a van! Ouf! Mamma, give me a handkerchief to wipe off the perspiration.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Wait, I'll wipe it off myself. You've half killed yourself! And it's just as if somebody were making you do it. Since you don't respect your

mother, you might at least respect these walls. Your father, my dear, has to make a great effort even to move his legs; but you skip about here like a jumping-jack!

LIPOCHKA. Go away with your advice! How can I act according to your notions? Do you want me to get sick? That would be all right if I were a doctor's wife. Ouf! What disgusting ideas you have! Bah! What a woman you are, mamma, drat it! Honestly, I sometimes blush for your stupidity!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What a darling child you are! Just consider how you're insulting your mother! Ah, you stupid chatterbox! Is it right to dishonor your parents with such words? Was it for this I brought you into the world, taught you, and guarded you as carefully as if you were a butterfly?

LIPOCHKA. You didn't teach me—strangers did; that'll do, if you please. You yourself, to tell the truth, had no bringing up. What of it? You bore a child—what was I then?—a child without understanding, I didn't understand the ways of society. But I grew up, I looked upon society manners, and I saw that I was far more educated than others. Why should I show too much indulgence for your foolishness? Why, indeed! Much reason for it, I must say!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Let up, let up, you shameless girl! You'll drive me out of patience; I'll go straight to your father, throw myself at his feet, and say: "Samson, dear, there's no living because of our daughter!"

LIPOCHKA. Yes, there's no living for you! I imagine so. But do you give me any chance to live? Why did you send away my suitor? Could there have been a better match? Wasn't he a Coopid?[1] What did you find in him that was soft?

[1] An attempt to reproduce Lipochka's illiterate pronunciation of the Russian word.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. He was soft enough; just a grinning booby. He came swaggering around, swaggered, strutted, strutted. What a rare bird!

LIPOCHKA. Yes, much you know! Of course he's a born gentleman; he behaves in a delicate way. They always do like that in his circle— But how do you dare to censure such people, of whom you haven't any idea? He, I tell you, is no cheap merchant. [*She whispers aside*] My darling, my beauty!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Yes, a good darling! Do tell! Pity we didn't marry you to some circus clown. Shame on you; there's some kind of folly in you; you whisper right under your mother's nose, just to spite her.

LIPOCHKA. I've reason enough, because you don't desire my happiness. You and pa are only good for picking quarrels and tyrannizing!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. You can think what you please. The Lord is your judge! But nobody feels the anxiety for her child that the mother who bore her does! Here you're always posing and kicking up all kinds of nonsense, while your father and I worry day and night about how to find you a good man, and establish you quickly.

LIPOCHKA. Yes, easy for you to talk; but just let me ask, what good does that do me, if you please?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. As if you thought I wasn't sorry for you! But what can I do? Have a mite of patience, even if you have been waiting a few years. It's impossible to find a husband for you in a second; it's only cats that catch mice in a jiffy.

LIPOCHKA. What have I got to do with your cats! It's a husband I want. What's the use! I'm ashamed to meet my acquaintances; in all Moscow we weren't able to choose a husband; other girls kept having all the luck. Wouldn't

it make anybody sick? All my friends were married long ago, and here I am like a kind of orphan! We found one man, and turned him down. Now, look here: find me a husband, and find him quick!.... I tell you in advance, look me up a husband right off, or it'll be so much the worse for you: purposely, just to spite you, I'll secretly scare up an adorer; I'll run away with a hussar, and we'll get married on the quiet.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What! What! You lewd creature! Who drummed such nastiness into your head? Merciful Lord, I can't get my breath! Ah, you dirty hussy! Well, there's nothing to be done. It's evident. I'll have to call your father.

LIPOCHKA. All you ever say is "father, father!" You have a lot to say when he's around, but just try it when you're by yourself!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. So you think I'm a fool, do you? What kind of hussars do you know, you brazen-faced creature? Phoo! Diabolical idea! Perhaps you think I'm not able to make you mind? Tell me, you shameless-eyed girl, where did you get that spiteful look? What, you want to be sharper than your mother! It won't take me long, I tell you, to send you into the kitchen to boil the kettles. Shame, shame on you! Ah! Ah! My holy saints! I'll make you a hempen wedding-dress, and pull it on over your head directly. I'll make you live with the pigs, instead of your parents!

LIPOCHKA. How's that? Will I allow anybody to boss me about? The idea!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Shut up, shut up, you babbling Bessie! Give in to your mother! What obstinate daring! Just peep another word and I'll stop your mouth with a potato. A beautiful consolation the Lord has sent me in you! Impudent slut! You're a miserable tomboy

and you haven't a womanly thought in your head! You're ready, I suppose, to jump on horseback and go off like a soldier!

LIPOCHKA. I suppose you'll ring in the police, presently! You'd do better to keep still, since you weren't properly brought up. I'm absolutely vile; but what are you, after all? Do you want to send me to the other world before my time? Do you want to kill me with your caprices? [*She weeps*] Already I'm about coughing my lungs out! [*Weeps.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. [*Stands and looks at her*] Well, stop, stop!

LIPOCHKA *weeps louder and then sobs.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I tell you, that'll do! I'm talking to you; stop it! Well, it's my fault; only do stop—it's my fault!

LIPOCHKA *weeps.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Lipochka! Lipa! Come, come, do stop! [*Tearfully*] Now, don't get angry at me—[*She weeps*] A silly old woman—ignorant— [*They weep together*] Please forgive me—I'll buy you some earrings.

LIPOCHKA. [*Weeping*] I don't want your old earrings; I have a drawer full already. You buy me some bracelets with emeralds.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I will, I will, only please stop crying!

LIPOCHKA. [*Through her tears*] I won't stop crying till I get married. [*She weeps.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. You'll get married, my darling; you will! Now, give me a kiss! [*They kiss*] There, Christ be with you! Now let me wipe away the tears for you. [*She wipes the tears*] Ustinya Naumovna wanted to come to-day; we're going to talk a bit.

LIPOCHKA. [*In a voice still rather trembly*] Oh, dear, I wish she'd hurry up!

SCENE III

The same and FOMINISHNA

FOMINISHNA. Just guess, my dear Agrafena Kondratyevna, who's come to call on us!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I can't say. Do you think I'm a witch at guessing, Fominishna?

LIPOCHKA. Why don't you ask me? Am I stupider than you or mamma?

FOMINISHNA. The fact is, I don't know how to tell you. You're pretty strong on talk; but when it comes to action you aren't there! I asked you, and asked you, to give me just a handkerchief—nothing expensive: two heaps of stuff are lying around on your closet floor now without any care; but it didn't do any good; it's always give it to strangers, give it to strangers!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. There, now, Fominishna, I'll never make this out till doomsday.

LIPOCHKA. Let her go; she had a drink of beer after breakfast, and so she's getting fuzzy in her head.

FOMINISHNA. That's all right; what are you laughing at? How's it coming out, Agrafena Kondratyevna? Sometimes the beginning is worse than the end.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. One can never find out anything from you! As soon as you begin to talk, we have to stop up our ears! Now, who was it who came here?

LIPOCHKA. A man or a woman?

FOMINISHNA. You can never see anything but men! Where in the world did one ever see a man wearing a widow's bonnet? This is a widow's affair—so what should her name be?

LIPOCHKA. Naturally, a woman without a husband, a widow.

FOMINISHNA. So I was right? And it comes out that it is a woman!

LIPOCHKA. What a senseless creature! Well, who is the woman?

FOMINISHNA. There, there now, you're clever, but no guesser; it couldn't be anybody else but Ustinya Naumovna.

LIPOCHKA. Ah, mamma, how lucky!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Where has she been all this time? Bring her in quickly, Fominishna.

FOMINISHNA. She'll appear herself in a second. She stopped in the yard, quarrelling with the porter; he didn't open the door quickly enough.

SCENE IV

The same and USTINYA NAUMOVNA

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. [*Entering*] Ouf, fa, fa! Why do you have such a steep staircase, my jewels? You climb, and climb, and much as ever you get there!

LIPOCHKA. Oh, here she is! How are you, Ustinya Naumovna?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Don't get in a hurry! There's people older than you. I want to chatter with your mamma a bit first. [*Exchanges kisses with* AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA] How are you, Agrafena Kondratyevna? How did you feel when you got up? How did you pass the night? All alive, my precious?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Thank the Lord! I'm alive, able to chew; I've been joking with my daughter all the morning.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. All about dresses, I suppose. [*Ex-*

changing kisses with LIPOCHKA] Well, your turn has come. What's this! It seems as if you had grown stouter, my jewel! Lord bless you! What could be better than to blossom out in beauty!

FOMINISHNA. Shame on you, temptress! You'll give us bad luck yet!

LIPOCHKA. Oh, what nonsense! It just looks that way to you, Ustinya Naumovna. I keep getting punier; first it's stomachache, then palpitation of the heart—just like the beating of a pendulum. Now I have a sinking feeling, or feel kind of seasick, and things swim before my eyes.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. [*To* FOMINISHNA] Come on, you dear soul, let's have a kiss now. To be sure, we've already exchanged greetings in the yard, my jewel, so we don't need to rub lips again.

FOMINISHNA. Just as you wish. Of course I'm no lady of a household. I don't amount to much; all the same I have a soul in me, and not just vapor!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. [*Sitting down*] Sit down, sit down, Ustinya Naumovna! Why do you stand up as stiff as a bean-pole? Fominishna, go tell them to heat up the samovar.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I've had my tea, I've had it, my jewel; may I perish on the spot if I haven't; and I've just dropped in for a moment.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What are you loafing about for, Fominishna? Run off a little more nimbly, granny.

LIPOCHKA. Let me, mamma, I'll go quicker; look how clumsy she is!

FOMINISHNA. Don't you meddle where you aren't asked! For my part, my dear Agrafena Kondratyevna, this is what I think: wouldn't it be nicer to serve cordial and some herring?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Cordial's all right, and the samovar's all right. Or are you stingy with other people's stuff? Well, when it's ready, have it brought here.

FOMINISHNA. Certainly! All right! [*She goes out.*

SCENE V

The same, without FOMINISHNA

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Well, haven't you any news, Ustinya Naumovna? This girl of mine is simply grieved to death.

LIPOCHKA. And really, Ustinya Naumovna, you keep coming, and coming, and no good comes of it.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. But one can't fix things up quickly with you, my jewels. Your daddy has his eye peeled for a rich fellow; he tells me he'll be satisfied with any bell-boy provided he has money and asks a small enough settlement. And your mamma also, Agrafena Kondratyevna, is always wanting her own taste suited; you must be sure to give her a merchant, with a decoration, who keeps horses, and who crosses himself in the old way.[1] You also have your own notions. How's a person going to please you all?

SCENE VI

The same and FOMINISHNA, *who enters and places vodka and relishes on the table.*

LIPOCHKA. I won't marry a merchant, not for anything. I won't! As if I was brought up for that, and learned French,

[1] Evidently, Bolshov and his family, like many other wealthy Moscow merchants, belonged to the sect of the Old Believers, one of whose dearest tenets is that the sign of the cross should be made with two fingers instead of with three.

and to play the piano, and to dance! No, no; get him wherever you want to, but get me an aristocrat.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Here, you talk with her.

FOMINISHNA. What put aristocrats into your head? What's the special relish in them? They don't even grow beards like Christians; they don't go to the public baths, and don't make pasties on holidays. But, you see, even if you're married, you'll get sick of nothing but sauce and gravy.

LIPOCHKA. Fominishna, you were born a peasant, and you'll turn up your toes a peasant. What's your merchant to me? What use would he be? Has he any ambition to rise in the world? What do I want of his mop?

FOMINISHNA. Not a mop, but the hair that God gave him, miss, that's it.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. See what a rough old codger your dad is; he doesn't trim his beard; yet, somehow, you manage to kiss him.

LIPOCHKA. Dad is one thing, but my husband is another. But why do you insist, mamma? I have already said that I won't marry a merchant, and I won't! I'd rather die first; I'll cry to the end of my life; if tears give out, I'll swallow pepper.

FOMINISHNA. Are you getting ready to bawl? Don't you think of it!—What fun do you get out of teasing her, Agrafena Kondratyevna?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Who's teasing her? She's mighty touchy.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Well, well, if you've got your mind set on a nobleman, we'll find you one. What sort do you want; rather stout, or rather lean?

LIPOCHKA. Doesn't matter, it's all right if he's rather stout, so long as he's no shorty. Of course he'd better be

tall than an insignificant little runt! And most of all, Ustinya Naumovna, he mustn't be snub-nosed, and he absolutely must be dark-complexioned. It's understood, of course, that he must be dressed like the men in the magazines. [*She glances at the mirror*] Oh, Lord, my hair looks like a feather-duster to-day!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Now, my jewel, I have a husband for you of the very sort you describe: aristocratic, tall, and brown-complected.

LIPOCHKA. Oh, Ustinya Naumovna! Not brown-complected, but dark-complexioned!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Yes, much I need, in my old age, to split my tongue talking your lingo. What I said, goes. He has peasants, and wears a norder about his neck. Now you go get dressed, and your mamma and I will talk this thing over.

LIPOCHKA. Oh, my dear, sweet Ustinya Naumovna, come up to my room a bit later; I must talk with you. Let's go, Fominishna.

FOMINISHNA. Ha, what a fidgety child you are!

[*They go out.*

SCENE VII

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA *and* USTINYA NAUMOVNA

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Won't you have a sip of cordial before your tea, Ustinya Naumovna?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Don't care if I do, my jewel.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. [*Pouring*] With my compliments.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. You ought to drink first, my pearl.

[*Drinks.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I'll look out for myself!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Ya! Phoo! Where d'you get this decoction?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. At the wine-shop. [*Drinks.*

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Buy it in bulk, I suppose?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. By the gallon. What should you want to buy in small quantities for? Our expenses, you see, are heavy.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What's the use of talking, my dear, what's the use! Now, I've been bustling about, bustling about for you, Agrafena Kondratyevna; trudging, trudging over the pavement, and at last I've grubbed up a suitable man: you'll gasp for joy, my jewels, for a fact.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. At last you're talking sense!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. A man of birth and of standing; such a grandee as you never even dreamed of.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I see I'll have to ask Samson Silych for a couple of fivers for you.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. That's all right, my jewel, I don't mind! And he has peasants, wears a norder on his neck; and as for intellect, why, he's simply a bonanza.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Then, Ustinya Naumovna, you ought to have informed him that our daughter hasn't got piles of money.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. But he doesn't know where to put his own.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. That would be good, and jolly good; only, look here, Ustinya Naumovna, and just consider it yourself, my friend: what am I going to do with a nobleman for a son-in-law? I shan't dare say a word to him; I'll be all at sea.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. It's a little scary at first, my jewel, but afterwards you'll get used to things, you'll manage some-

how or other. But, here, we must talk a bit with Samson Silych; he may even know him, this man of ours.

SCENE VIII

The same and RISPOLOZHENSKY

RISPOLOZHENSKY. [*Entering*] I've come to you, my dear Agrafena Kondratyevna. I was going to have a talk with Samson Silych, but he was busy, I saw; so I thought: now, I'll go to Agrafena Kondratyevna. By the way, is that vodka, near you? I'll just take a thimbleful, Agrafena Kondratyevna. [*Drinks.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. With my compliments, my dear sir. Please sit down, won't you? How are you getting along?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What a life I live! Well, I'm just loafing, Agrafena Kondratyevna; you know yourself, my family's large, business is dull. But I don't grumble; it's a sin to grumble, Agrafena Kondratyevna.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. That's the last thing in the world to do, my dear sir.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Whoever grumbles, I think, offends against God, Agrafena Kondratyevna. This is the way it happened——

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What are your front names, my dear sir? I keep forgetting.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Sysoy Psoich, my dear Agrafena Kondratyevna.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What does Psoich mean, my jewel? What lingo is that? [1]

RISPOLOZHENSKY. I can't tell you positively: they called my father Psoy—well, naturally, that makes me Psoich.

[1] The name lends itself to the interpretation, "son of a dog (*pes*)."

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. But, Psoich, like that, Psoich! However, that's nothing; there are worse, my jewel.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Well, Sysoy Psoich, what was it you were going to tell us?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Well, it was like this, my dear Agrafena Kondratyevna: it isn't as if it were a proverb, in a kind of fable, but a real occurrence. I'll just take a thimbleful, Agrafena Kondratyevna. [*Drinks.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Help yourself, my dear sir, help yourself.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. [*Sits down*] There was an old man, a venerable old man— Here, I've forgotten where it was, my dear madam—only it was in some desert spot. He had twelve daughters, my dear madam; each younger than the other! He didn't have the strength to work himself; his wife, too, was very old, the children were still small; and one has to eat and drink. What they had was used up by the time they were old, and there was no one to give them food and drink. Where could they find refuge with their little children? Then he set to thinking this way, then that way. — No, my dear lady, that's where thinking won't do any good. "I'll go," he said, "to the crossroads; perhaps I can get something from charitable people." He sat all day. "God'll help you," they told him. Sits there another day. "God'll help you!" Well, my dear lady, he began to murmur.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Holy saints!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. "Good Lord!" he said, "I'm no extortioner, I'm no usurer—it would be better," he said, "to lay hands on myself."

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Merciful heavens!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. And lo! my dear madam, there came a dream to him in the night——

SCENE IX

The same and BOLSHOV

BOLSHOV. Ha, you here, sir? What's this you're preaching here?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. [*Bows*] I hope you're well, Samson Silych.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Why, my jewel! You seem to be growing thin. Or have you been crippled somehow?

BOLSHOV. [*Sitting down*] Must be I've caught cold, or perhaps my blood's in a bad way.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Well, Sysoy Psoich, and what happened to him next?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Some other time, Agrafena Kondratyevna, some other time I'll finish telling; I'll run in some day about dusk and tell you about it fully.

BOLSHOV. What's the matter with you; trying to be sanctimonious? Ha, ha, ha! It's time you came to!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. There, now, you're beginning! You won't let us have a heart-to-heart talk together.

BOLSHOV. Heart-to-heart talk! Ha, ha, ha! But you just ask him how his case was lost from court; there's the story he'll tell you better.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. On the contrary, it was not lost! That's not true, Samson Silych!

BOLSHOV. Then what did they turn you out for?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. This is why, my dear Agrafena Kondratyevna. I took one case home with me from the court; on the way my friend and I just stepped aside—mortal man is weak; well, you understand—if you'll permit me to say it, into the wine-shop, so to speak. I left it there, and when I

was rather tipsy, I suppose, I forgot it. What of that? It might happen to anybody. Afterwards, my dear lady, they missed that case in court; we looked and looked, and I went home twice with the bailiff—still we couldn't find it. They wanted to bring me to trial, but suddenly I remembered: it must be, now, I forgot that thing and left it in the wine-shop. I went there with the bailiff, and there it was.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I declare! That may happen to a sober man as well as to one who drinks. What a pity!

BOLSHOV. How is it they didn't send you off to Kamchatka?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. To Kamchatka! But why, permit me to ask you, why should they send me off to Kamchatka?

BOLSHOV. Why? Because you're drunk and disorderly. Do they have to show you any indulgence? Why, you'll just kill yourself drinking.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. On the contrary, they spared me. You see, my dear Agrafena Kondratyevna, they wanted to try me for that very thing—I went immediately to our general, and flopped at his feet! "Your Excellency!" I said. "Don't ruin me! I've a wife," I said, "and little children!" "Well," he said, "deuce take you; they won't strike a man when he's down: tender your resignation, so I shan't see you here." So he spared me. What now! God bless him! He doesn't forget me even now; sometimes I run in to see him on a holiday: "Well," says he, "how are you, Sysoy Psoich?" "I came, your Excellency, to wish you a happy holiday." So, I went to the Troitsa monastery not long ago, and brought him a consecrated wafer. I'll just take a thimbleful, Agrafena Kondratyevna. [*Drinks.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. With my compliments, my dear sir. Ustinya Naumovna, let's you and me go out; the samovar is ready, I suppose; I'll show you that we have something new for the wedding outfit.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I suppose, my jewel, you have heaps of stuff ready.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Why certainly. The new materials have come, and it *seems* as if we didn't have to pay money for them.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What's the use of talking, my pearl! You have your own shop, and it's as if they grew in your garden. [*They go out.*

SCENE X

BOLSHOV *and* RISPOLOZHENSKY

BOLSHOV. Well, Sysoy Psoich, I suppose you've wasted a good deal of ink in your time on this pettifoggery?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. He, he! Samson Silych, cheap goods! But I came to inquire how your business is getting on.

BOLSHOV. You did! Much you need to know! Bah, you low-down people! You bloodsuckers! Just let you scent out something or other, and immediately you sneak round with your diabolical suggestions.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What kind of a suggestion could come from me, Samson Silych? What kind of a teacher should I be, when you yourself, perhaps, are ten times wiser than I am? I shall do what I'm asked to do. How can I help it? I'd be a hog if I didn't; because I, it may be said, am loaded with favors by you, and so are my kiddies. I'm too much of a fool to advise you; you know your own business yourself better than anybody else.

BOLSHOV. Know my own business! That's the trouble; men like me, merchants, blockheads, understand nothing; and this just serves the turn of such leeches as you. And now you'll besiege me on every side and haunt me to death.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. How can I help haunting you? If I didn't love you I wouldn't haunt you. Haven't I any feelings? Am I really a mere dumb brute?

BOLSHOV. I know that you love me—you all love us; only one can't get anything decent out of you. Here I'm worrying, worrying with this business so that I'm worn out, if you believe me, with this one anxiety. If I could only get it over with, and out of my head.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Well, Samson Silych, you aren't the first, nor the last; aren't others doing it?

BOLSHOV. How can they help it, brother? Others are doing it. But how do they do it; without shame, without conscience! They ride in carriages with easy springs; they live in three-storied houses. One of them will build a belvedere with pillars, in which he's ashamed to show his ugly phiz; and that's the end of him, and you can't get anything out of him. These carriages will roll away, Lord knows where; all his houses are mortgaged, and all the creditors will get out of it'll be three pairs of old boots. That's the whole story. And who is it that he'll fool? Just some poor beggars whom he'll send out into the world in nothing but their shirts. But my creditors are all rich men; what difference will it make to them?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Naturally. Why, Samson Silych, all that is in our hands.

BOLSHOV. I know that it's in our hands; but are you equal to handling this affair? You see, you lawyers are a rum lot. Oh, I know you! You're nimble enough in words, and then you go and mess things up.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. But come now, Samson Silych, if you please: do you think this is the first time for me! As though I didn't know that already! He, he, he! Yes, I've done such things before; and they've turned out fine. They'd

have sent anybody else long ago for such jobs to the other side of nowhere.

BOLSHOV. Oho! What kind of a scheme will you get up?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Why, we'll see—according to circumstances. I'll just take a thimbleful, Samson Silych. [*Drinks*] Now, the first thing, Samson Silych, we must mortgage the house and shops; or sell them. That's the first thing.

BOLSHOV. Yes, that positively must be done right away. But on whom shall we shove the stuff? Shall it be my wife?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Illegal, Samson Silych! That's illegal! It is stated in the laws that such sales are not valid. It's an easy thing to do, but you'll have to see that there're no hitches afterward. If it's to be done, it must be done thoroughly, Samson Silych.

BOLSHOV. That's it: there must be no loose ends.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. If you make it over to an outsider, there's nothing they can cavil at. Let 'em try to make a row later, and try to dispute good legal papers.

BOLSHOV. But here's the trouble: when you make over your house to an outsider, maybe it'll stick to him, like a flea to a soldier.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Well, Samson Silych, you must look for a man who knows what conscience is.

BOLSHOV. But where are you going to find him nowadays? Everybody's watching his chance these days to grab you by the collar; and here you want conscience!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Here's my idea, Samson Silych, whether you want to listen to me or not: what sort of a fellow is your clerk?

BOLSHOV. Which one? Do you mean Lazar?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Yes; Lazar Elizarych.

BOLSHOV. All right, Lazar; make it over to him; he's a young man with understanding, and he has some capital.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What do you want, Samson Silych, a mortgage-deed or a purchase-deed?

BOLSHOV. Whichever you can get at the lowest interest rate'll suit me. But do the thing up brown and I'll give you such a fee, Sysoy Psoich, as'll fairly make your hair curl.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Set your mind at rest, Samson Silych, I know my own business. But have you talked to Lazar Elizarych about this thing or not? Samson Silych, I'll just take a thimbleful. [*Drinks.*

BOLSHOV. Not yet. We'll talk it over to-day. He's a capable lad: only wink at him, and he understands. And he'll do the business up so tight that you can't get in a finger. Well! we'll mortgage the house; and then what?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Then we'll write out a statement that such and such notes are due, and that we'll pay twenty-five kopeks on the ruble: well, then go see the creditors. If anybody is especially stubborn, you can add a bit, and if a man gets real angry, pay him the whole bill. You'll pay him on the condition that he writes that he accepted twenty-five kopeks—just for appearances, to show the others. "That's the way *he* did," you see; and the others, seeing the document, will agree.

BOLSHOV. That's right, there's no harm in bargaining: if they don't take it at twenty-five kopeks, they'll take it at half a ruble; but if they won't take it at half a ruble, they'll grab for it with both hands at seventy kopeks. We'll profit, anyhow. There, you can say what you please, but I have a marriageable daughter; I want to pass her on, and get rid of her. And then, my boy, it'll be time for me to take a rest; I'll have an easy time lying on my back; and to the devil with all this trading! But here comes Lazar.

SCENE XI

The same and PODKHALYUZIN, *who enters*

BOLSHOV. What do you say, Lazar? Just come from town? How are your affairs?

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh, they're getting on so-so; thank God, sir! Good morning, Sysoy Psoich! [*Bows.*

RISPOLOZHENSKY. How do you do, my dear Lazar Elizarych! [*Bows.*

BOLSHOV. If they're getting on, let 'em get. [*After a short silence*] But, look here, Lazar, when you make up the balance for me at your leisure, you might deduct the retail items sold to the gentry, and the rest of that sort of thing. You see, we're trading and trading, my boy, but there's not a kopek of profit in it. Maybe the clerks are going wrong and are carrying off stuff to their folks and mistresses. You ought to give 'em a word of advice. What's the use of fooling around without making any profits? Don't they know the tricks of the trade? It's high time, it seems to me.

PODKHALYUZIN. How in the world can they help knowing, Samson Silych? It seems as if I were always in town and always talking to them, sir.

BOLSHOV. But what do you say?

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, the usual thing, sir. I try to have everything in order and as it should be. "Now, my boys," I say, "look sharp, now. Maybe there's a chance for a sale; some idiot of a purchaser may turn up, or a colored pattern may catch some young lady's eye, and click!" I say, "you add a ruble or two to the price per yard."

BOLSHOV. I suppose you know, brother, how the Germans in our shops swindle the gentlemen. Even if we're not

Germans, but orthodox Christians, we, too, like to eat stuffed pasties. Ain't that so? Ha?

RISPOLOZHENSKY *laughs.*

PODKHALYUZIN. Why certainly, sir. "And you must measure," I say, "more naturally: pull and stretch ju-u-u-st enough, God save us, not to tear the cloth: you see," I say, "we don't have to wear it afterwards. Well, and if they look the other way, nobody's to blame if you should happen to measure one yard of cloth twice."

BOLSHOV. It's all one. I suppose the tailor'd steal it. Ha? He'd steal it, I suppose?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. He'd steal it, Samson Silych, certainly that rascal would steal it; I know these tailors.

BOLSHOV. That's it; the whole lot of them are rascals, and we get the thanks.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Quite right, Samson Silych, you're certainly speaking the truth.

BOLSHOV. Ah, Lazar, profits are rotten these days: it's not as it used to be. [*After a moment of silence*] Well, did you bring the paper?

PODKHALYUZIN. [*Taking it from his pocket and handing it over*] Be so good as to read it, sir.

BOLSHOV. Just give it here; we'll take a look.

[*He puts on his spectacles and examines the paper.*

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Samson Silych, I'll just take a thimbleful.

He drinks, then puts on his spectacles, sits down beside BOLSHOV, *and looks at the newspapers.*

BOLSHOV. [*Reads aloud*] "Crown announcements, and from various societies. One, two, three, four, five, and six, from the Foundlings' Hospital." That's not in our line: it's not for us to buy peasants. "Seven and eight from Moscow University, from the Government Regencies, from the Office

of the Board of Charities." Well, we'll pass that up, too. "From the City Council of Six." Now, sir, maybe there's something here! [*He reads*] "The Moscow City Council of Six hereby announces: Would not some one care to take in his charge the collection of taxes as named below?" That's not our line, you have to give security. "The Office of the Widows' Home hereby invites—" Let it invite, we won't go. "From the Orphans' Court." I haven't any father or mother, myself. [*Examines farther*] Aha! Here something's slipped up! Listen here, Lazar! "Year so-and-so, twelfth day of September, according to the decision of the Commerce Court, the merchant Fedót Selivérstov Pleshkóv, of the first guild, was declared an insolvent debtor, in consequence of which—" What's the use of explaining? Everybody knows the consequences. There you are, Fedót Selivérstov! What a grandee he was, and he's gone to smash! But say, Lazar, doesn't he owe us something?

PODKHALYUZIN. He owes us a very little, sir. They took somewhere between six and eight barrels of sugar for home use.

BOLSHOV. A bad business, Lazar. Well, he'll pay me back in full, out of friendliness.

PODKHALYUZIN. It's doubtful, sir.

BOLSHOV. We'll settle it somehow. [*Reads*] "Moscow merchant of the first guild, Antíp Sysóyev Enótov, declared an insolvent debtor—" Does *he* owe us anything?

PODKHALYUZIN. For vegetable oil, sir; just before Lent they took about three kegs, sir.

BOLSHOV. Those blooming vegetarians that keep all the fasts! They want to please God at other people's expense. Brother, don't you trust their sedate ways! Those people cross themselves with one hand, and slip the other into your pocket. Here's the third: "Moscow merchant of the second

guild, Efrém Lúkin Poluarshínnikov,[1] declared an insolvent debtor." Well, what about him?

PODKHALYUZIN. We have his note, sir.

BOLSHOV. Protested?

PODKHALYUZIN. Yes, sir. He himself's in hiding, sir.

BOLSHOV. Well! And the fourth there, Samopálov. Why! have they got a combination against us?

PODKHALYUZIN. Such an underhanded gang, sir.

BOLSHOV. [*Turning over the pages*] One couldn't get through reading them until to-morrow. Take it away!

PODKHALYUZIN. They only dirty the paper. What a moral lesson for the whole merchant corporation! [*Silence.*

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Good-by, Samson Silych, I'll run home now; I have some little matters to look after.

BOLSHOV. You might sit a little while longer.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. No, confound it, Samson Silych, I haven't time. I'll come to you as early as possible to-morrow morning.

BOLSHOV. Well, as you choose!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Good-by! Good-by, Lazar Elizarych! [*He goes out.*

SCENE XII

BOLSHOV *and* PODKHALYUZIN

BOLSHOV. Now consider, Lazar, what trading's like: just think about it. You think it's getting money for nothing? "Money, not much!" they tell you; "ain't seen any for a long time. Take my note," they say. But what are you going to get from some people on a note? Here I have about a hundred thousand rubles' worth of 'em lying around, and

[1] Half a yard.

with protests. You don't do anything but add to the heap each year. If you want, I'll sell you the whole pile for half a ruble in silver. You'll never catch the men who signed 'em even with bloodhounds. Some have died off, some have run away; there's not even a single man to put in the pen. Suppose you do send one there, Lazar, that doesn't do you any good; some of 'em will hold on so that you can't smoke 'em out. "I'm all right here," they say, "you go hang!" Isn't that so, Lazar?

PODKHALYUZIN. Just so, that's the way it happens.

BOLSHOV. Always notes, notes! But what on earth is a note? Absolutely nothing but paper, if I may say so. And if you discount it, they do it at a rate that makes your belly ache, and you pay for it later with your own property. [*After a brief silence*] It's better not to have dealings with provincials: always on credit, always on credit; and if he ever does bring the money, it's in slick small change—you look, and there's neither head nor tail to the coins, and the denomination's rubbed off long ago. But do as you please here! You'd better not show your goods to the tradesman of this place; any one of 'em'll go into any warehouse and sniff and peck, and peck, and then clear out. It'd be all right if there were no goods, but what do you expect a man to trade in? I've got one apothecary shop, one dry goods, the third a grocery. No use, none of them pays. You needn't even go to the market; they cut the prices down worse than the devil knows what; but if you sell a horse-collar, you have to throw in trimmings and earnest money, and treat the fellows, and stand all sorts of losses through wrong weights. That's the way it goes! Don't you realize that?

PODKHALYUZIN. Seems I ought to realize it, sir.

BOLSHOV. There's business for you, and that's the way to do it. [*Silence*] Well, Lazar, what do you think?

PODKHALYUZIN. What should I think, sir? That's just as you please. My business is that of a subordinate.

BOLSHOV. What do you mean, subordinate? Just speak out freely. I'm asking you about the business.

PODKHALYUZIN. Again, Samson Silych, it's just as you please, sir.

BOLSHOV. You twaddle one thing: "As you please." But what do you think?

PODKHALYUZIN. That I can't say, sir.

BOLSHOV. [*After a brief silence*] Tell me, Lazar, on your conscience; do you love me? [*Silence*] Do you love me or not? Why are you silent? [*Silence*] I've given you food and drink, set you up in the world; haven't I?

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh, Samson Silych! What's the use of talking about it, sir? Don't have any doubts about me! Only one word: I'm just such as you see me.

BOLSHOV. What do you mean by that?

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, if you need anybody or anything whatsoever, you can count on me. I shan't spare myself.

BOLSHOV. Well, then, there's nothing more to be said. In my opinion, Lazar, now is the most proper time; we have a good deal of ready cash, and all the notes have fallen due. What's the use of waiting? You'll wait, if you please, until some merchant just like yourself, the dirty cur, will strip you bare, and then, you'll see, he'll make an agreement at ten kopeks on the ruble, and he'll wallow in his millions, and won't think you're worth spitting at. But you, an honorable tradesman, must just watch him, and suffer—keep on staring. Here's what I think, Lazar: to offer the creditors such a proposition as this—will they accept from me twenty-five kopeks on the ruble? What do you think?

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, according to my notion, Samson

Silych, if you're going to pay at the rate of twenty-five kopeks, it would be more decent not to pay at all.

BOLSHOV. Why, really, that's so. You won't scare anybody by a bluff; but it's better to settle the affair on the quiet. Then wait for the Lord to judge you at the Second Coming. Only it's a heap of trouble. I'm going to mortgage my house and shops to you.

PODKHALYUZIN. Impossible to do it without some bother, sir. You'll have to get rid of the notes for something, sir; have the merchandise transferred somewhere further off. We'll get busy, sir!

BOLSHOV. Just so. Although an old man, I'm going to get busy. But are you going to help?

PODKHALYUZIN. Good gracious, Samson Silych, I'll go through fire and water, sir.

BOLSHOV. What could be better! Why the devil should I scratch around for pennies. I'll make one swoop, and that's an end to it! Only God give us the nerve! Thanks, Lazar. You've treated me like a friend. [*He rises*] Now, get busy! [*He goes up to him and taps him on the shoulder*] If you get the thing done properly, you and I'll divide the profits. I'll reward you for the rest of your life.

[*He goes to the door.*

PODKHALYUZIN. I don't need anything, Samson Silych, except your peace of mind, sir. I've lived with you since my earliest years, and I've received countless favors from you; it may be said, sir, you took me as a little brat, to sweep out your shops; consequently I simply must be grateful.

ACT II

Office in the house of BOLSHOV. *Rear centre a door; on the left a staircase leading to the floor above.*

SCENE I

TISHKA *near the front of the stage, with a brush*

TISHKA. What a life, what a life! Sweep the floors before daylight! And is it my business to sweep floors? Things aren't the same here as with decent folks. Now if the other bosses have a boy, he lives with the boys; that is, he hangs around the shop. But with me it's now here, now there, tramp the pavement all day as if you were crazy. You'll soon feather your nest—I don't think! Decent people keep a porter for running around; but at our place he lies on the stove with the kittens, or he hangs around with the cook; but *you're* in demand. At other people's it's easy-going; if you get into mischief now and then, they make allowances for your youth. But at our house—if it isn't he, then it's somebody else; either the old man or the old woman will give you a hiding; otherwise there's the clerk Lazar, or there's Fominishna, or there's—any old rascal can lord it over you. What a cursed life it is! But if you want to tear yourself away from the house and go somewhere with friends to play three-card monte, or have a game of handball—don't think of such a thing! Now, really, there's something feels wrong in my head. [*He climbs upon a chair on his knees and looks in the mirror*] How do you do, Tikhon Savostyánovich! How are you getting along? Are you all top notch? Now,

then, Tishka, just do a stunt. [*He makes a grimace*] That's what! [*Another*] Exactly like——

[*He bursts out laughing.*

SCENE II

TISHKA *and* PODKHALYUZIN, *who steals in and seizes him by the collar.*

PODKHALYUZIN. What are you doing there, you little imp?

TISHKA. What? You know what! I was wiping off dust!

PODKHALYUZIN. Were you wiping it off with your tongue? As if you could find any dust on the mirror! I'll show you some dust! You're showing off! I'll just warm up the nape of your neck so you'll know it.

TISHKA. Know what? Now what have I done?

PODKHALYUZIN. What have you done? What have you done? Say another word and you'll find out what! Just let out a peep!

TISHKA. Yes, a peep! I'm going to tell the boss, and then you'll catch it!

PODKHALYUZIN. Going to tell the boss! What's your boss to me? Why, if it came to that—what's your boss to me!—Why, you're just a kid that has to be taught; what were you thinking of? If we didn't wallop you imps there'd be no good come of you. That's the regular way of doing things. I, myself, my boy, have come through fire, water, and copper pipes.

TISHKA. I know you did.

PODKHALYUZIN. Shhh—you little devil! [*Threatening him.*

TISHKA. Ha, just try it! I'll sure tell, honest to goodness I will.

PODKHALYUZIN. What are you going to tell, you devil's pepper-pot?

TISHKA. What'll I say? Why, that you scold!

PODKHALYUZIN. Great impression that'll make! You're quite a gentleman! Come here, sir! Has Sysoy Psoich been here?

TISHKA. He sure has.

PODKHALYUZIN. Talk sense, you little devil! Was he going to come again?

TISHKA. He was that!

PODKHALYUZIN. Well, you can run along, now.

TISHKA. Do you want any vodka?

PODKHALYUZIN. Yes, I do. I'll have to treat Sysoy Psoich. [*He gives money*] Buy a bottle, but you keep the change for gingerbread. But see that you hurry, so they don't miss you here!

TISHKA. I'll be home before a short-haired girl can twist her braids. Off I go, hippity-hop.

SCENE III

PODKHALYUZIN *alone*

PODKHALYUZIN. What a misfortune! Here's where a misfortune has come upon us! What's to be done now? Well, it's a bad business. Now we can't avoid declaring ourselves bankrupt. Well, suppose the boss should have something left over; but where do I come in? What shall I do with myself? Sell junk in the second-hand market! I've worked, I've worked about twenty years, and then to be sent rambling! Now, how am I going to settle this matter? Perhaps with merchandise? Here, he said to sell the notes. [*He draws them out and reads them*] It must be that it's going

to be possible to profit by it. [*He walks about the room*] They say a fellow ought to know what conscience is. Well, of course he ought to; but in what sense must he understand that? Everybody has conscience where a good man is concerned; but when the man himself is cheating others, then where does your conscience come in? Samson Silych is a very rich merchant, and has hatched up this whole business now just to kill time, so to speak. But I'm a poor man! If I should make a little extra profit in this business—then there can't be any sin in it; because he himself is acting dishonorably, and going against the law. And why should I pity him? The course is clear; well, don't slip up on it: he follows his politics, and you look out for your interest. I'd have seen the thing through with him, but I don't feel like it. Hm!—What day-dreams will come into a man's head! Of course, Olimpiada Samsonovna is a cultivated young lady; and it must be said, there're none on earth like her; but of course that suitor won't take her now; he'll say, "Give me money!" But where are you going to get money? And now she can't marry a nobleman because she hasn't any money. Sooner or later they'll have to marry her to a merchant. [*He walks on in silence*] I'll raise the dough, and bow to Samson Silych. "Samson Silych," says I, "I'm at an age when I must think about the continuance of posterity; and I, now, Samson Silych, haven't grudged my sweat and blood for your tranquillity. To be sure, now, Olimpiada Samsonovna is a cultivated young lady; but I, Samson Silych, am no common trash; you can see for yourself, if you please. I have capital, and I'm a good manager in that line." Why shouldn't he give her to me? Ain't I a man? I haven't been detected in any knavery; I'm respectful to my elders. But in addition to all that, as Samson Silych has mortgaged his house and shops to me, I can frighten him with the mortgage. Knowing as

I do the disposition of Samson Silych to be what it is, that may very easily happen. This is the way with his sort: once they get an idea into their head, you simply can't drive it out. It's just as when, three years ago, he wanted to shave his beard. No matter how much Agrafena Kondratyevna begged and wept, "No," he said, "afterwards I'll let it grow again; but for the time being I'll have my own way." And he took and shaved it. It's the same way with this business; if I make a hit with him, or the idea strikes him all right—then it's sweet wedding-bells to-morrow, and that's all, and don't you dare argue! I could jump from the tower of Ivan the Great for the joy of it.

Enter TISHKA *with the bottle.*

SCENE IV

PODKHALYUZIN *and* TISHKA

TISHKA. [*Coming in with the bottle*] Here I am! I've come.

PODKHALYUZIN. Listen, Tishka, is Ustinya Naumovna here?

TISHKA. Up-stairs there. And the shyster's coming.

PODKHALYUZIN. Well, put the vodka on the table, and bring some relishes.

TISHKA *puts down the vodka and brings relishes; then goes out.*

SCENE V

PODKHALYUZIN *and* RISPOLOZHENSKY

PODKHALYUZIN. Ah, my respects to you, sir!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Mine to you, my dear Lazar Elizarych, mine to you! Fine. I think, now, perhaps there's something I can do. Is that vodka, near you? I'll just take a

thimbleful, Lazar Elizarych. My hands have begun to shake mornings, especially the right one. When I go to write something, Lazar Elizarych, I have to hold it with my left. I swear I do. But take a sip of vodka, and it seems to do it good. [*Drinks.*

PODKHALYUZIN. Why do your hands shake?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. [*Sits down by the table*] From anxiety, Lazar Elizarych; from anxiety, my boy.

PODKHALYUZIN. Indeed, sir! But I suppose it's because you're plundering people overmuch. God is punishing you for your unrighteousness.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. He, he, he!—Lazar Elizarych! How could I plunder anybody? My business is of a small sort. I'm like a little bird, picking up small grains.

PODKHALYUZIN. You deal in small quantities, of course?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. You'd deal even in small quantities if you couldn't get anything else. Well, it wouldn't matter so much if I were alone; but, you see, I have a wife and four kiddies. They all want to eat, the little dears. One says, "Daddy, give me!" Another says, "Daddy, give me!" And I'm a man who feels strongly for his family. Here I entered one boy in the high school; he has to have a uniform, and then something else. And what's to become of the old shack?—Why, how much shoe-leather you wear out simply walking from Butírky to the Voskresénsky Gates.

PODKHALYUZIN. That's right, sir.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. And why do you make the trip? You write a little petition for one man, you register somebody else in the citizen class. Some days you'll not bring home half a ruble in silver. I vow, I'm not lying! Then what're you going to live on? Lazar Elizarych, I'll just take a thimbleful. [*Drinks*] "So," I think, "I'll just drop in on Lazar Elizarych; perhaps he'll spare me a little change."

PODKHALYUZIN. For what sort of knavery, sir?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What do you mean by knavery! Come, that's a sin, Lazar Elizarych! Don't I serve you? I'm your servant till the grave; command me what you want. And I fixed up the mortgage for you!

PODKHALYUZIN. See here, you've been paid! And it's not your business to keep harping on the same string!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Just so, Lazar Elizarych, I've been paid. Just so! Ah, Lazar Elizarych, poverty has crushed me!

PODKHALYUZIN. Poverty crushed you! Oh, that happens, sir. [*He approaches and sits down by the table*] Well, sir, I have a little extra money; I've no place to put it.

[*Lays his pocketbook on the table.*

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What, you, Lazar Elizarych? Extra money? I'm afraid you're joking.

PODKHALYUZIN. All joking aside, sir.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Well, if you have a little extra money, why not help a poor man? God'll reward you for it.

PODKHALYUZIN. But d'you need much?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Give me just three rubles.

PODKHALYUZIN. Is that all, sir?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Well, give me five.

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh, ask more!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Well, then, if you'll be so good, give me ten.

PODKHALYUZIN. Ten, sir! What, for nothing?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Indeed not! I'll work it off, Lazar Elizarych; we'll be quits sometime or other.

PODKHALYUZIN. That's all talk, sir. The snail keeps going, and sometime she'll get there! But here's the little business I want to put up to you now: did Samson Silych promise you much for fixing up this scheme?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. I'm ashamed to tell you, Lazar Elizarych! A thousand rubles and an old coon-skin overcoat. No one will accept less than I, by heavens; just go and inquire prices.

PODKHALYUZIN. Well, here's what, Sysoy Psoich; I'll give you two thousand for that identical business, sir.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Oh, Lazar Elizarych, my benefactor! I and my wife and children'll be your slaves!

PODKHALYUZIN. One hundred in silver, spot cash; but the rest later upon the completion of the whole business, sir!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Now, then, how can one help praying for people like you! Only a kind of ignorant swine could fail to feel that. I bow down to your feet, Lazar Elizarych!

PODKHALYUZIN. Really now, what for, sir? Only, Sysoy Psoich, don't run about like a chicken with its head cut off, but go in for accuracy—straight to the point, and walk the line. Do you understand, sir?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. How can I help understanding? Why, Lazar Elizarych, do you think I'm still a boy? It's time I understood!

PODKHALYUZIN. Yes, but what do you understand? Here's the way things are, sir. Just listen first. Samson Silych and I came to town, and we brought along the list as was proper. Then he went to the creditors: this one didn't agree, that one didn't agree; that's the way, and not a single one will take up the proposition. That's the way the affair stands.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What's that you say, Lazar Elizarych? Oh! Just think of it, what a gang.

PODKHALYUZIN. And how are we going to make a good thing out of this business now? Do you understand me, or not?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. That is, the insolvency, Lazar Elizarych?

PODKHALYUZIN. The insolvency will take care of itself; but I mean my own business affairs.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. He, he, he!—That is, the house and the shops—even—the house—he, he, he!——

PODKHALYUZIN. What's the matter, sir?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. No, sir; that's just my foolishness; I was just joking.

PODKHALYUZIN. Fine jokes, indeed! Don't you joke about that, sir. The house is nothing; I have such a dream in my head now about that subject, that I must talk it over with you at length. Just come to my room, sir. Tishka!

SCENE VI

The same and TISHKA

PODKHALYUZIN. Put all this in order! Well, let's go, Sysoy Psoich!

TISHKA *is about to carry away the vodka.*

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Wait, wait! Eh, my boy, what an idiot you are! If you see that a fellow wants to drink, just wait a bit. You just wait a bit. You're young yet, but you just be polite and condescending. Lazar Elizarych, I'll just take a thimbleful.

PODKHALYUZIN. Help yourself, only hurry up; I'm afraid *he'll* come.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Right away, my dear Lazar Elizarych, right away! [*Drinks and smacks his lips*] But it would be better to take it with us. [*They go out.*

TISHKA *arranges something or other; from above descend* USTINYA NAUMOVNA *and* FOMINISHNA. TISHKA *goes out.*

FOMINISHNA. Now do fix it up for her, Ustinya Naumovna! You see the girl is all worked up; and, indeed, it's time, my dear. Youth isn't a bottomless kettle, and they say it gets empty. I can say that from my own experience. I got married when I was thirteen; but in another month she'll have passed her nineteenth year. Why let her pine away for nothing? Others of her age have long since borne children. And so, my dear, why let her pine away?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I keep thinking about that myself, my jewel; but the thing isn't held up on my account; I have a whole pack of suitors, all right. But, confound it, she and her mother are mighty particular.

FOMINISHNA. Why should they be particular? Well, the chief thing is that they should be fresh-complexioned people, not bald, and not smell bad; and then anything'll pass, so it's a man!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. [*Sitting down*] Sit down a minute, my jewel. I have worn myself out the livelong day; from early morning I've been tearing around like a wet hen. But, you see, I couldn't neglect anything; I'm an indispensable person everywhere. Naturally, my jewel, every person is a human being: a man needs a wife, a girl a husband; give it to them if you have to rob the cradle; then here and there there's a genuine wedding. And who fixes them up? Why, I do. Ustinya Naumovna has to bear the burden for all of them. And why does she have to? Because that's the way things are; from the beginning of the world, that's the way the wheel was wound up. However, to tell the truth, they don't cheat me for my trouble: one gives me the material for a dress, another a fringed shawl, another makes up a cap for you, and here and there you'll get a gold piece, and here and there something better—just what the job deserves and they're able to pay.

FOMINISHNA. What's the use of talking, my dear; what's the use of talking!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Sit down, Fominishna; your legs are old and rickety.

FOMINISHNA. Eh! Haven't time, my dear! You see, it's just awful; because *he* doesn't come home we're all scared to death: he may come home drunk at any time. And then what a bad one, good Lord! Then what a row he'll kick up.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Naturally; a rich peasant is worse than the devil to talk to.

FOMINISHNA. We've seen him do terrible things. One night last week he came home drunk. He tore around, and what a row! It was simply awful; he smashed the china—"Ooo!" he said, "I'll kill the whole crowd of you at once!"

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Vulgarity!

FOMINISHNA. That's the truth, my dear. But I'll just run up-stairs, darling—Agrafena Kondratyevna is alone in my room. When you're going home, come back to me; I'll tie up a bit of ham for you. [*She mounts the stairs.*

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I'll follow, my jewel, I'll follow.

PODKHALYUZIN *enters.*

SCENE VII

USTINYA NAUMOVNA *and* PODKHALYUZIN

PODKHALYUZIN. Ah! Ustinya Naumovna! It's been ages since I've seen you, ma'am.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. How are you, dear soul! How've you been?

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh, able to be around, ma'am.

[*He sits down.*

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I'll capture a little mamzelle for you if you want me to.

PODKHALYUZIN. Thank you kindly—I don't need one yet.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. If you don't want one yourself, my jewel, I'll do a good turn for your friends. I suppose you have friends around town, a whole pack.

PODKHALYUZIN. I have quite a few, ma'am.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Well, if you have, thank the Lord! If you know of a marriageable man, whether he's a bachelor, unmarried, or a widower—drag him straight to me.

PODKHALYUZIN. Will you find him a wife?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I will. Why shouldn't I find him a wife? I'll do it in a jiffy.

PODKHALYUZIN. That's very fine, ma'am, But now I ask you, Ustinya Naumovna, why do you come here to us so confoundedly often?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What's that to you? Why shouldn't I come? I'm no thief, no sheep without a name. What do you mean by that question?

PODKHALYUZIN. But, really, aren't you wasting your time coming?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Wasting my time? Where did you get that idea, my jewel? Just see here, what sort of a husband I've found: an aristocrat, has peasants, and a fine young man.

PODKHALYUZIN. Why has the thing come to a halt, ma'am?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. It hasn't come to a halt! He wanted to come to-morrow to get acquainted. So we'll hitch him up, and it'll all be over.

PODKHALYUZIN. Hitch him up, try it—he'll give you the slip.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What's the matter, are you in your right mind, my jewel?

PODKHALYUZIN. You'll see!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. May I die before to-night, but

you're either drunk, my jewel, or you've wandered clean out of your head.

PODKHALYUZIN. Be so good as not to trouble yourself about that; you look out for yourself; but I know what I know.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Well, what do you know?

PODKHALYUZIN. No matter what I know, ma'am.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. If you know something, tell me what it is: I suppose your tongue won't fall off.

PODKHALYUZIN. That's the point of the thing—that I can't tell it.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Why can't you? Why do you hesitate to tell me, my jewel? Go ahead, talk—it doesn't matter what it is.

PODKHALYUZIN. It's not a matter of conscience. But if I tell you, of course you'll go and blab!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Curst if I do! You may chop off my hand!

PODKHALYUZIN. That's it, ma'am; a promise is better than money.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Of course. Well, what do you know?

PODKHALYUZIN. Here's what, Ustinya Naumovna: isn't it possible to throw over that suitor you've found, ma'am?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What's the matter with you; are you gone daft?

PODKHALYUZIN. Gone daft nothing, ma'am! But if you want to have a heart-to-heart talk, honor bright, ma'am; then here's the sort of thing it is, ma'am: at my house there's a certain Russian merchant I know, who is very much in love with Olimpiada Samsonovna, ma'am. "No matter what I have to give," says he, "so long as I get married," says he; "I shan't grudge any sum."

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Why didn't you tell me about that before, my jewel?

PODKHALYUZIN. There was nothing to tell for the good reason that I only just now found out about it, ma'am.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. But it's late now, my jewel!

PODKHALYUZIN. And what a suitor he is, Ustinya Naumovna! He'll shower you with gold from head to foot, ma'am; he'll have a cloak made for you out of live sables.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. But, my dear, it's impossible! I'd be tickled to death, but I've given my word.

PODKHALYUZIN. Just as you please, ma'am! But if you betroth her to the other fellow, you'll bring such bad luck upon yourself, that you'll not get clear afterwards!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. But just consider yourself, how'll I have the nerve to show my face before Samson Silych? I gave it to him hot and heavy: that the fellow is rich, and handsome, and so much in love that he is half dead; and now what'll I say? You know yourself what a fellow Samson Silych is; you see he'll pull my cap over my ears before you know it.

PODKHALYUZIN. Pull your cap nothing, ma'am!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. And I've got the girl all worked up. Twice a day she sends to me and asks: "What's the matter with my suitor?" and, "What's he like?"

PODKHALYUZIN. But don't you run away from your own good fortune, Ustinya Naumovna. Do you want two thousand rubles and a sable cloak for merely arranging this wedding, ma'am? But let our understanding about the match be private. I tell you, ma'am, that this suitor's such a sort as you've never seen: there's only one thing, ma'am: he's not of aristocratic origin.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. But is she an aristocrat? Pity if she is, my jewel! That's the way things go these days:

every peasant girl is trying to worm her way into the nobility. —Now, although this here Olimpiada Samsonovna—of course, God give her good health—gives presents like a princess, yet, believe me, her origin's no better than ours. Her father, Samson Silych, dealt in leather mittens on the Balchúg; respectable people called him Sammy, and fed him with thumps behind the ears. And her mother, Agrafena Kondratyevna, was little more than a peasant girl, and he got her from Preobrazhénskoye. They got together some capital, climbed into the merchant class—so the daughter has her eye peeled for the title of princess. And all that through money. How much worse am I than she? Yet I have to trot at her heels. God knows what kind of bringing-up she's had: she walks like an elephant crawls on his belly; whether French or piano, it's a bit here and a bit there, and there's nothing to it; and when she starts to dance—I have to stuff a handkerchief in my mouth.

PODKHALYUZIN. But, look here—it'd be more proper for her to marry a merchant.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. But how'll I stand with the first suitor, my jewel? I've already assured him that Olimpiada Samsonovna is such a beauty, that she's the real ticket for him; "and educated," I said, "in French, and is trained in all sorts of society ways." And now what am I going to say to him?

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, just tell him also: "Now, she *is* a beauty, and cultivated in a good many ways; only they've lost all their money." And he'll break off himself!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Well, now, that's so, my jewel! But, no, wait! You see I told him that Samson Silych is rolling in money.

PODKHALYUZIN. See here, you talk too much. But how do you know how much money Samson Silych has; you haven't counted it, have you?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Ask anybody you please; every one knows that Samson Silych is the richest sort of merchant.

PODKHALYUZIN. Yes! Much you know! But what'll happen when, after you've engaged a man of standing, Samson Silych won't give any money? Afterwards the fellow'll come up and say, says he: "I'm no merchant, that you can cheat me out of the dowry!" Furthermore, like a man of standing he'll file a complaint at court, because a man of standing has his own way everywhere, ma'am; then Samson Silych and I'll be ruined, and there'll be no getting out of it for you. Here, you yourself know you can cheat anybody of our sort out of a dowry, that'll work; but just try to fool a man of standing, and you'll not get away with it afterwards.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. That's enough trying to scare me! You've muddled my head completely.

PODKHALYUZIN. Here, take these hundred rubles in silver as earnest-money, and give us your hand on it, ma'am.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. And you say, my jewel, two thousand rubles and a sable cloak?

PODKHALYUZIN. Exactly so, ma'am. Be at rest on that score!—And you'll put on that sable cloak, Ustinya Naumovna, and you'll go out walking—why, anybody will think you're a general's wife.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Do you think so? Well, now, indeed! When I put on that sable cloak, I'll look my perkiest, with my hands by my sides; then your bearded friends will stare with their mouths wide open. They'll get to sighing so that you couldn't stop them with a fire engine; the women will all turn up their noses from jealousy.

PODKHALYUZIN. Just so, ma'am!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Give me the earnest-money! Here goes!

PODKHALYUZIN. But, Ustinya Naumovna, you're doing this of your own free will; don't back out.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Back out, what for? Just look: two thousand rubles, and a sable cloak!

PODKHALYUZIN. I tell you, we'll make it out of live sables. There's nothing more to be said.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Well, good-by, my emerald! I'll run off now to the suitor. We'll see each other to-morrow, and then I'll report to you.

PODKHALYUZIN. Wait a minute! Where're you going! Just follow me—we'll just take a drink of vodka, ma'am. Tishka! Tishka! [*Enter* TISHKA] You keep a lookout, and if you see the boss coming, run for me straight off.

[*They go out.*

SCENE VIII

TISHKA *alone.*

TISHKA. [*Sits down beside the table and takes some money out of his pocket*] Half a ruble in silver—that's what Lazar gave me to-day. And the other day, when I fell from the steeple, Agrafena Kondratyevna gave me ten kopeks; I won twenty-five kopeks at heads and tails; and day before yesterday the boss forgot and left one whole ruble on the counter. Gee, here's money for you! [*He counts to himself. The voice of* FOMINISHNA *is heard behind the scene:* "Tishka, oh, Tishka! How long have I got to call you?"] Now what's the matter there? ["Is Lazar at home?"]—He was, but he's sure gone now! ["Well, where has he sneaked to?"] How in the world should I know? He doesn't ask my leave. If he had, I'd know.

FOMINISHNA *comes down the stairs.*

FOMINISHNA. You see Samson Silych has come, and seems to be tipsy.

TISHKA. Phew! We're goners!

FOMINISHNA. Run for Lazar, Tishka; there's a dear; run quick!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. [*Appearing at the head of the stairs*] What's this, Fominishna dear, where's he bound for?

FOMINISHNA. This way, I guess, my dear! Ah, I'll close the doors, good heavens, I'll close them; let him go upstairs, but you stay here, my dear.

A knock at the door, and the voice of SAMSON SILYCH: "Hey! open up; who's there?" AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA *disappears.*

FOMINISHNA. Come in, honey, come in and go to sleep; God bless you!

BOLSHOV. [*Behind the door*] What's the matter with you, you old cripple; have you lost your wits?

FOMINISHNA. Ah, my dear boy! Ah, I'm a blind old granny. But, you see, I was fool enough, somehow, to think you'd come home tipsy. Forgive me, I've gotten deaf in my old age.

SAMSON SILYCH *comes in.*

SCENE IX

FOMINISHNA *and* BOLSHOV

BOLSHOV. Has that shyster been cooking up any deviltry here?

FOMINISHNA. They've cooked cabbage soup with corned beef, and roast goose.

BOLSHOV. Are you gone daft, you old fool?

FOMINISHNA. No, dear! I gave the order to the cook myself!

BOLSHOV. Get out! [*He sits down.*

FOMINISHNA *goes to the door;* PODKHALYUZIN *and* TISHKA *come in.*

FOMINISHNA. [*Returning*] Ah, I'm a fool, a fool! Don't punish me for my bad memory. The cold roast sucking pig had entirely jumped out of my mind.

SCENE X

PODKHALYUZIN, BOLSHOV, *and* TISHKA

BOLSHOV. Go to the pigs yourself! [FOMINISHNA *goes out. To* TISHKA] What are you gaping at? Haven't you anything to do?

PODKHALYUZIN. [*To* TISHKA] You've been spoken to, haven't you?

TISHKA *goes out.*

BOLSHOV. Has the shyster been here?

PODKHALYUZIN. He has, sir.

BOLSHOV. Did you talk with him?

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, Samson Silych? Does he have any feeling? Isn't his soul naturally nothing but ink, sir? He just thrums on one string—to declare yourself bankrupt.

BOLSHOV. If I must declare myself bankrupt, I'll do it, and there's an end to it.

PODKHALYUZIN. Ah, Samson Silych, what's that you're saying!

BOLSHOV. What! pay out money? Where did you get that notion? I will rather burn everything in the fire, before I'll give them a kopek. Transfer the merchandise, sell the notes, let 'em pilfer, let anybody steal who wants to; but I'm not going to pay a kopek.

PODKHALYUZIN. Pardon me, Samson Silych, we had the business all going fine; and now everything has to be thrown into confusion.

BOLSHOV. What affair was it of yours? It ain't yours. You just work hard—I'll not forget you.

PODKHALYUZIN. I'm not in need of anything after the kindness you have shown me, and you're quite wrong in having any such idea about me. I'm ready to give away my whole soul for you, and by no means to do anything tricky. You're getting on in years; Agrafena Kondratyevna is a very gentle lady; Olimpiada Samsonovna is an accomplished young lady, and of suitable years; and you've got to spend some thought on her. But now such are the circumstances; there's no knowing what may come of all this.

BOLSHOV. Well, what could come of it? I'm the only one responsible.

PODKHALYUZIN. Why talk about you! You, Samson Silych, have already had a long life; thank God, you're in a ripe old age; but Olimpiada Samsonovna, of course, is a young lady whose like can't be found on earth. I'm speaking to you conscientiously, Samson Silych; that is, absolutely according to my feelings. If I'm exerting myself on your behalf now, and am putting in my whole strength, too, it may be said, grudging neither sweat nor blood—then it's mostly because I'm sorry for your family.

BOLSHOV. Come, really now?

PODKHALYUZIN. If you please, sir. Now, suppose all this ends well. Very good, sir. You'll have something left with which to establish Olimpiada Samsonovna.—Well, of that there's nothing to say; let there be money, and suitors'll be found, sir. Well, but what a sin, Lord save us! if they object, and begin to hound you through the courts; and such a stigma falls upon the family, and if, furthermore, they should take away the property. Sir, the ladies'd be obliged to endure hunger and cold, and without any care, like shelterless birdies. But Lord save them from that! What would happen then? [*He weeps.*

BOLSHOV. What are you crying about?

PODKHALYUZIN. Of course, Samson Silych, I merely say that just for instance—talk at the right time, keep still at the wrong time; words don't hurt. But you see, the Old Nick is powerful—he shakes the hills.

BOLSHOV. What's to be done, my boy? Evidently such is the will of God, and you can't oppose it.

PODKHALYUZIN. That's just it, Samson Silych! But all the same, according to my foolish way of reasoning, you should settle Olimpiada Samsonovna in good time upon a good man; and then she will be, at any rate, as if behind a stone wall, sir. But the chief thing is that the man should have a soul, so that he'll feel. As for that noble's courting Olimpiada Samsonovna—why he's turned tail already.

BOLSHOV. Turned tail how? What gave you that notion?

PODKAHLYUZIN. It isn't a notion, Samson Silych. You ask Ustinya Naumovna. Must be some one who knows him heard something or other.

BOLSHOV. What of it! As my affairs are going now there's no need of such a person.

PODKHALYUZIN. Samson Silych, just take into consideration! I'm a stranger, and no relative of yours, but for the sake of your well-being I know no rest by day or by night, my very heart is all withered. But they're marrying to him the young lady who, it may be said, is an indescribable beauty; and they're giving money, sir; but he swaggers and carries it high! Well, is there any soul in him, after all that?

BOLSHOV. Well, if he don't want her he needn't have her, and we won't cry about it.

PODKHALYUZIN. No, Samson Silych, you just consider about that: has the man any soul? Here I am, a total stranger, yet I can't see all this without tears. Just understand that, Samson Silych! Nobody else would care enough about it to pine away because of another man's business, sir.

But you see, even if you drive me out now, even if you beat me, still I won't leave you; because I cannot—I haven't that kind of a heart.

BOLSHOV. But how in the world could you think of leaving me? You see my only hope now is you. I'm old, and my affairs have gotten into a tight fix. Just wait! It may be we'll still swing some kind of a deal such as you're not expecting.

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh, I can't do that, Samson Silych. Just understand this much: I'm absolutely not that kind of a man! To anybody else, Samson Silych, of course it's all the same; he doesn't care whether the grass grows; but I can't do that way, sir. Kindly see yourself, sir, whether I'm hustling or not. I'm simply wasting away now like some poor devil, on account of your business, sir; because I'm not that kind of a man, sir. I'm doing all this because I feel sorry for you, and not for you so much as for your family. You ought to realize that Agrafena Kondratyevna is a very tender lady, Olimpiada Samsonovna a young lady whose like can't be found on earth, sir——

BOLSHOV. Not on earth? Look here, brother, aren't you hinting around a little?

PODKHALYUZIN. Hinting, sir? No, I didn't mean, sir!——

BOLSHOV. Aha! Brother, you'd better speak more openly. Are you in love with Olimpiada Samsonovna?

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, Samson Silych, must be you want to joke me.

BOLSHOV. Joke, fiddlesticks! I'm asking you seriously.

PODKHALYUZIN. Good heavens, Samson Silych, could I dare think of such a thing, sir?

BOLSHOV. Why shouldn't you dare? Is she a princess or something like that?

PODKHALYUZIN. Maybe she's no princess; but as you've

been my benefactor and taken the place of my own father— But no, Samson Silych, how is it possible, sir, how can I help feeling it!

BOLSHOV. Well, then, I suppose you don't love her?

PODKHALYUZIN. How can I help loving her, sir? Good gracious, it seems as if I loved her more than anything on earth. But no, Samson Silych, how is it possible, sir!

BOLSHOV. You ought to have said: "I love her, you see, more than anything on earth."

PODKHALYUZIN. How can I help loving her, sir? Please consider yourself: all day, I think, and all night, I think— Oh, dear me, of course Olimpiada Samsonovna is a young lady whose like can't be found on earth— But no, that cannot be, sir. What chance have I, sir?

BOLSHOV. What cannot be, you poor soft-head?

PODKHALYUZIN. How can it be possible, Samson Silych? Knowing you, sir, as I do, like my own father, and Olimpiada Samsonovna, sir; and again, knowing myself for what I'm worth—what chance have I with my calico snout, sir?

BOLSHOV. Calico nothing. Your snout'll do! So long as you have brains in your head—and you don't have to borrow any; because God has endowed you in that way. Well, Lazar, suppose I try to make a match between you and Olimpiada Samsonovna, eh? That indescribable beauty, eh?

PODKHALYUZIN. Good gracious, would I dare? It may be that Olimpiada Samsonovna won't look kindly on me, sir!

BOLSHOV. Nonsense! I don't have to dance to her piping in my old age! She'll marry the man I tell her to. She's my child: if I want, I can eat her with my mush, or churn her into butter! You just talk to me about it!

PODKHALYUZIN. I don't dare, Samson Silych, talk about it with you, sir! I don't want to appear a scoundrel to you.

BOLSHOV. Get along with you, you foolish youngster! If I didn't love you, would I talk with you like this? Do you understand that I can make you happy for life? I can simply make your life for you.

PODKHALYUZIN. And don't I love you, Samson Silych, more than my own father? Damn it all!—what a brute I am.

BOLSHOV. Well, but you love my daughter?

PODKHALYUZIN. I've wasted away entirely, sir. My whole soul has turned over long since, sir!

BOLSHOV. Well, if your soul has turned over, we'll set you up again. Johnny's the boy for our Jenny!

PODKHALYUZIN. Daddy, why do you favor me? I'm not worth it. I'm not worth it! My poor face would positively crack a mirror.

BOLSHOV. What of your face! Here, I transfer all the property to you; so that afterwards the creditors will be sorry that they didn't take twenty-five kopeks on the ruble.

PODKHALYUZIN. You can bet they'll be sorry, sir!

BOLSHOV. Well, you get off to town now, and after a while come back to the girl; we'll play a little joke on 'em.

PODKHALYUZIN. Very good, daddy, sir! [*They go out.*

ACT III

Setting as in ACT I

SCENE I

BOLSHOV *comes in and sits down in the armchair; for some time he looks into the corners and yawns.*

BOLSHOV. Here's the life; it's well said: vanity of vanities, and all is vanity. The devil knows, I myself can't make out what I want. If I were to take a snack of something, I'd spoil my dinner, and if I sit still I'll go crazy. Perhaps I might kill a little time drinking tea. [*Silence*] Here's all there is to it; a man lives, and lives, and all at once he dies and he turns to dust. Oh, Lord, oh, Lord!

[*He yawns and looks into the corners.*

SCENE II

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA *comes in with* LIPOCHKA, *who is very much dressed up.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Get along, get along, my darling; don't catch yourself on the sides of the doorway. Just look, Samson Silych, my dear lord and master, and admire how I've rigged up our daughter! Phew! go away! What a peony-rose she is now! [*To her*] Ah, you little angel, you princess, you little cherub, you! [*To him*] Well, Samson Silych, isn't it all right? Only she ought to ride in a six-horse carriage.

BOLSHOV. She'll go in a two-horse carriage—she's no high-flying proprietress.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. To be sure, she's no general's daughter, but, all the same, she's a beauty! Well, pet the child a little; what are you growling like a bear for?

BOLSHOV. Well, how do you want me to pet her? Shall I lick her hands, or bow down to her feet? Fine circus, I must say! I've seen something more elegant than that.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. But what have you seen? No matter what; but this is your daughter, your own child, you man of stone!

BOLSHOV. What if she is my daughter? Thank God she has shoes, dresses, and is well fed—what more does she want?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What more! Look here, Samson Silych, have you gone out of your head? Well fed! What if she is well fed! According to the Christian law we should feed everybody; people look after strangers, to say nothing of their own folks. Why, it's a sin to say that, when people can hear you. Anyhow, she's your own child!

BOLSHOV. I know she's my own child—but what more does she want? What are you telling me all these yarns for? You don't have to put her in a picture-frame! I know I'm her father.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Then, my dear, if you're her father, then don't act like a stepfather! It's high time, it seems to me, that you came to your senses. You'll soon have to part with her, and you don't grind out one kind word; you ought, for her good, to give her a bit of good advice. You haven't a single fatherly way about you!

BOLSHOV. No, and what a pity; must be God made me that way.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. God made you that way! What's the matter with you? It seems to me God made her,

too, didn't he? She's not an animal, Lord forgive me for speaking so!—but ask her something!

BOLSHOV. What shall I ask her? A goose is no playmate for a pig; do what you please.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. We won't ask you when it comes to the point; meantime, say something. A man, a total stranger, is coming—no matter how much you try, a man is not a woman—he's coming for his first visit, when we've never seen him before.

BOLSHOV. I said, stop it!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What a father you are! And yet you call yourself one! Ah, my poor abandoned little girl, you're just like a little orphan with drooping head! He turns away from you, and won't recognize you! Sit down, Lipochka; sit down, little soul, my charming little darling!

[*She makes her sit down.*

LIPOCHKA. Oh, stop it, mamma! You've mussed me all up!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. All right, then, I'll look at you from a distance.

LIPOCHKA. Look if you want to, only don't rave! Fudge, mamma, one can't dress up properly without your going off into a sentimental fit.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. So, so, my dear! But when I look at you, it seems such a pity.

LIPOCHKA. Why so? It had to come some time.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. All the same, it's a pity, you little fool. We've been raising you all these years, and you've grown up—but now for no reason at all we're giving you over to strangers, as if we were tired of you, and as if you bored us by your foolish childishness, and by your sweet behavior. Here, we'll pack you out of the house, like an enemy from the town; then we'll come to, and look around, and you'll be

gone forever. Consider, good people, what it'll be like, living in some strange, far-away place, choking on another's bread, and wiping away your tears with your fist! Yes, good God, she's marrying beneath her; some blockhead will be butting in—a blockhead, the son of a blockhead!

[*She weeps.*

LIPOCHKA. There you go, crying! Honestly, aren't you ashamed, mamma? What do you mean by blockhead?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. [*Weeping*] The words came out of themselves. I couldn't help it.

BOLSHOV. What made you start this bawling? If anybody asks you, you don't know yourself.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I don't know, my dear, I don't know; the fit just came over me.

BOLSHOV. That's it, just foolishness. Tears come cheap with you.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Yes, my dear, they do! They do! I know myself that they come cheap; but how can you help it?

LIPOCHKA. Fudge, mamma, how you act! Stop it! Now, he'll come any moment—what's the use?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I'll stop, child, I'll stop; I'll stop right off!

SCENE III

The same, and USTINYA NAUMOVNA

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. [*Entering*] How are you, my jewels! What are you gloomy and down in the dumps for?

[*Kisses are exchanged.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. We'd about given you up.

LIPOCHKA. Well, Ustinya Naumovna, will he come soon?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. It's my fault, I own up at once;

it's my fault! But our affairs, my jewels, aren't in a very good way.

LIPOCHKA. How! What do you mean by that?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Now what new notion have you got?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Why, my pearls, our suitor is wavering.

BOLSHOV. Ha, ha, ha! You're a great go-between! How are you going to make a match?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. He's like a balky horse, he won't whoa nor giddup. You can't get a sensible word out of him.

LIPOCHKA. But what's this, Ustinya Naumovna? What do you mean, really?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Holy saints! How can it be!

LIPOCHKA. Have you just seen him?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I was at his house this morning. He came out just as he was, in his dressing-gown; but he treated me, be it said to his honor. He ordered coffee, and rum, and heaps of fancy crackers—simply piles of them. "Eat away!" says he, "Ustinya Naumovna." I had come on business, you know, so it was necessary to find out something definite. So I said: "You wanted to go to-day and get acquainted." But on that subject he wouldn't say a sensible word to me. "Well," he said, "we'll think it over, and advise about it." And all he did was pull at the cords of his dressing-gown.

LIPOCHKA. Why does he just fold his arms and sentimentalize? Why, it's disgusting to see how long this lasts.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Really, now, why is he showing off? Aren't we as good as he is?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Plague take him; can't we find another fellow?

BOLSHOV. Don't you look for another, or the same thing will happen again. I'll find another for you myself.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Yes, much you will, unless you get down off the stove and hustle. You've actually forgotten, I think, that you have a daughter.

BOLSHOV. We'll see!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. We'll see what? We'll see nothing! Bah—don't talk to me, please; don't aggravate me. [*She sits down.*

BOLSHOV *bursts out laughing;* USTINYA NAUMOVNA *walks off with* LIPOCHKA *to the other side of the stage.* USTINYA NAUMOVNA *inspects the girl's dress.*

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. My! how you're dolled up—that dress certainly makes you look better. You didn't make it yourself, did you?

LIPOCHKA. Horrible need I had of making it! Why, do you think we're beggars? What are dressmakers for?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Beggars, the idea! Who's saying anything so foolish to you? They can tell from your housekeeping that you didn't make it yourself. However, your dress is a fright.

LIPOCHKA. What's the matter with you? Have you lost your wits? Where are your eyes? What gave you that wild notion?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What are you getting on your high horse for?

LIPOCHKA. Nonsense! Think I'll stand such rubbish? What, am I an uncultivated hussy!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What are you taking on so for? Where did such a caprice come from? Am I finding fault with your dress? Why, isn't it a dress?—and anybody will say it's a dress. But it isn't becoming to you; it's absolutely not the right thing for your style of beauty—blot out my

soul if I lie. For you a gold one would be little enough; let's have one embroidered with seed-pearls. Ah! there you smile, my jewel! You see, I know what I'm talking about!

TISHKA. [*Entering*] Sysoy Psoich wants me to ask whether he, says he, can come in. He's out there with Lazar Elizarych.

BOLSHOV. March! Call him in here with Lazar.

TISHKA *goes out.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Well, now, the relish isn't ready for nothing: we'll take a snack. Now, Ustinya Naumovna, I suppose you've been wanting a drop of vodka for a long time?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Just the thing—it's one o'clock, the admiral's lunch-time.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Now, Samson Silych, move out of that place; what are you sitting there like that for?

BOLSHOV. Wait a minute; they're coming up. There's time enough.

LIPOCHKA. Mamma, I'll go change my dress.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Run along, my dear, run along.

BOLSHOV. Wait a minute before changing—there's a suitor coming.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What sort of a suitor can that be? Quit your fooling.

BOLSHOV. Wait a bit, Lipa, there's a suitor coming.

LIPOCHKA. Who is it, daddy? Do I know him or not?

BOLSHOV. You'll see him in a minute; and then, perhaps, you'll recognize him.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What are you listening to him for? What sort of a clown is coming? He's just talking to hear himself talk.

BOLSHOV. I told you that he was coming; and I usually know what I'm talking about.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. If anybody were actually coming, then you'd be talking sense; but you keep saying he's coming, he's coming, but God knows who it is that's coming. It's always like that.

LIPOCHKA. Well, in that case I'll stay, mamma. [*She goes to the mirror and looks at herself. Then to her father*] Daddy!

BOLSHOV. What do you want?

LIPOCHKA. I'm ashamed to tell you, daddy!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Ashamed of what, you little fool? Speak out if you need anything.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Shame isn't smoke—it won't eat out your eyes.

LIPOCHKA. No, by heavens, I'm ashamed!

BOLSHOV. Well, hide your face if you're ashamed!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Do you want a new hat; is that it?

LIPOCHKA. There! you didn't guess it. No, not a hat.

BOLSHOV. Then what do you want?

LIPOCHKA. To marry a soldier!

BOLSHOV. Just listen to that!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Wake up, you shameless girl! Lord help you!

LIPOCHKA. Why—you see, others marry soldiers.

BOLSHOV. Well, let 'em marry 'em; you just sit by the sea and wait for a fair breeze.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. And don't you dare give me any of your lip! I won't give you my mother's blessing.

SCENE IV

The same and LAZAR, RISPOLOZHENSKY, *and* FOMINISHNA *in the doorway.*

RISPOLOZHENSKY. How do you do, my dear Samson Silych! How do you do, my dear Agrafena Kondratyevna! Olimpiada Samsonovna, how do you do!

BOLSHOV. How are you, old man, how are you! Do us the favor to sit down. You sit down, too, Lazar!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Won't you have a snack? I have a relish all ready for you.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Why shouldn't I, dear lady? I'd just like a thimbleful of something now.

BOLSHOV. Let's all go in together pretty soon; but now, meanwhile, we can have a little talk.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Why not have a little talk? D'you know, my jewels, I heard—it must have been printed in the newspaper, whether it's true or not—that a second Bonaparte has been born, and it may be, my jewels——

BOLSHOV. Bonaparte's all right, but we'll trust most of all in the mercy of God; it's not a question of that now.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What is it a question of, my pearl?

BOLSHOV. Why, about the fact that our years are approaching their decline; our health also is failing every minute, and the Creator alone can foresee what is ahead. So we have proposed, while we're still living, to give in marriage our only daughter; and in regard to her settlement we may hope also that she'll not bring into ill repute our resources and origin; above all, in other people's eyes.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Just hear how sweetly he tells that, the jewel!

BOLSHOV. And since now our daughter is here in person,

and in view of the fact that we are convinced of the honorable conduct and the sufficient means of our future son-in-law, which for us is a matter of extreme concern, in consideration of God's blessing, we hereby designate him in the presence of these witnesses. Lipa, come here.

LIPOCHKA. What do you want, daddy?

BOLSHOV. Come here to me. I shan't eat you, never fear. Well, now, Lazar, toddle up!

PODKHALYUZIN. Been ready a long time, sir!

BOLSHOV. Now, Lipa, give me your hand.

LIPOCHKA. How! What nonsense is this? Where did you get this rubbish?

BOLSHOV. Look out that I don't have to force you!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Now you're catching it, young lady!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Lord! What on earth is this?

LIPOCHKA. I don't want to! I don't want to! I won't marry anything so disgusting!

FOMINISHNA. The power of the cross be with us!

PODKHALYUZIN. Evidently, daddy, it's not for me to see happiness in this world! Evidently, sir, it can't be as you would wish!

BOLSHOV. [*Seizes* LIPOCHKA *violently by the arm; takes* LAZAR'S *hand*] Why can't it, if I want it to be? What am I your father for, if not to command you? Have I fed her for nothing?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What're you doing! What're you doing! Recollect yourself!

BOLSHOV. Stay on your own side of the fence! This is none of your business! Well, Lipa! Here's your future husband! I ask you to love and cherish him! Sit down side by side and talk nice; and then we'll have a fine dinner and set about the wedding.

LIPOCHKA. What! Do you think I want to sit down with that booby! What nonsense!

BOLSHOV. If you won't sit down, I'll sit you down, and put an end to your monkey-business!

LIPOCHKA. Who ever heard of educated young ladies being married off to their employees!

BOLSHOV. Better shut up! If I say so, you'll marry the porter. [*Silence.*

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Say, now, Agrafena Kondratyevna, if that isn't a pity!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I myself, the mother, am as much in the dark as a clothes-closet. And I can't understand what in the world has caused this!

FOMINISHNA. Lord! I'm past sixty, and how many weddings I've seen; but I've never seen anything so shameful as this.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. What do you mean, you murderers; do you want to dishonor the girl?

BOLSHOV. Yes, much I have to listen to your high-falutin' talk. I've decided to marry my daughter to a clerk, and I'll have my way, and don't you dare argue; I don't give a hang for anybody. Come now, we'll go take a snack; but just let them kid each other, and maybe they'll make it up somehow or other.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Let's go, Samson Silych, and you and I, for company, 'll just take a thimbleful. Yes, yes, Agrafena Kondratyevna, that's the first duty, that children should obey their parents. We didn't start that custom, and we shan't see the last of it.

They all rise and go out except LIPOCHKA, PODKHALYUZIN, *and* AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA.

LIPOCHKA. Mamma, what does this mean? Does he want to make a cook of me? [*She weeps.*

PODKHALYUZIN. Mamma, ma'am! Such a son-in-law as will respect you and, naturally, make your old age happy, aside from me you won't find, ma'am.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. How are you going to do that, my dear?

PODKHALYUZIN. Mamma, ma'am! God has made me aspire so high, ma'am for this reason, ma'am, because the other fellow, mamma, will turn you down flat, ma'am; but I, till I land in my coffin [*weeps*], must have feeling, ma'am!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Ah, saints alive! But how can this be?

BOLSHOV. [*Through the door*] Wife, come here!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Coming, my dear, coming!

PODKHALYUZIN. Mamma, you remember the word I said just now!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA *goes out.*

SCENE V

LIPOCHKA *and* PODKHALYUZIN

Silence

PODKHALYUZIN. Olimpiada Samsonovna, ma'am! Olimpiada Samsonovna! I suppose you abominate me? Say only one word, ma'am! Just let me kiss your little hand!

LIPOCHKA. You blockhead, you ignorant lout!

PODKHALYUZIN. But why, Olimpiada Samsonovna, do you want to insult me, ma'am?

LIPOCHKA. I'll tell you once, now and forever, that I won't marry you, and I won't!

PODKHALYUZIN. That's just as you please, ma'am! Love can't be forced. Only here's what I want to announce to you, ma'am——

LIPOCHKA. I won't listen to you; go away from me! As

if you were an educated gentleman! You see that I wouldn't marry you for anything in the world—you ought to break off yourself!

PODKHALYUZIN. Now, Olimpiada Samsonovna, you were pleased to say "break off." Only, if I should break off, what would happen then, ma'am?

LIPOCHKA. Why, the thing that would happen would be that I'd marry an aristocrat.

PODKHALYUZIN. An aristocrat, ma'am! But an aristocrat won't take you without a dowry!

LIPOCHKA. What do you mean, without dowry? What are you talking about? Just take a look and see what kind of a dowry I have; it fairly hits you in the face!

PODKHALYUZIN. Those dish-rags, ma'am? A nobleman won't take dish-rags. A nobleman wants it in cash, ma'am.

LIPOCHKA. What of it? Dad will give cash!

PODKHALYUZIN. All right, if he will, ma'am! But what if he hasn't any to give? You don't know about your papa's affairs, but I know 'em mighty well; your papa's a bankrupt, ma'am.

LIPOCHKA. What do you mean, bankrupt? And the house and shops?

PODKHALYUZIN. The house and shops—are mine, ma'am!

LIPOCHKA. Yours! Get out! Are you trying to make a fool of me? Look for a bigger goose than I am.

PODKHALYUZIN. But I have here some legal documents.

[*He produces them.*

LIPOCHKA. So you bought them of dad?

PODKHALYUZIN. I did, ma'am!

LIPOCHKA. Where'd you get the money?

PODKHALYUZIN. Money! Glory to God, I have more money than any nobleman.

LIPOCHKA. What in the world are they doing to me?

They've been bringing me up all these years, and then go bankrupt! [*Silence.*

PODKHALYUZIN. Now suppose, Olimpiada Samsonovna, that you married a nobleman—what will that ever amount to, ma'am? Only the glory of being a lady, but not the least pleasure, ma'am. Please consider: ladies themselves often go to the market on foot, ma'am. And if they do drive out anywhere, then it's only the glory of having four horses; but the whole team ain't worth one merchant's horse. By heaven, it ain't, ma'am! And they don't dress so blamed superbly either, ma'am! But if, Olimpiada Samsonovna, you should marry me, ma'am—here's the first word: you'll wear silk gowns even at home, and visiting, and to the theatre, ma'am—and we shan't dress you in anything but velvets. In respect to hats and cloaks—we won't care what's in style with the nobility, but we'll furnish you the finest ever! We'll get horses from the Orlov stud. [*Silence*] If you have doubts on the question of my looks, then that's just as you like, ma'am; I'll put on a dress coat, and trim my beard or cut it off, according to the fashion, ma'am; that's all one to me, ma'am.

LIPOCHKA. You all talk that way before the wedding; but afterwards you cheat us.

PODKHALYUZIN. May I die on the spot, Olimpiada Samsonovna! Damnation blast me if I lie! Why should I, Olimpiada Samsonovna? D'you think we'll live in a house like this? We'll buy one in the Karetny, ma'am; and how we'll decorate it! We'll have birds of paradise on the ceilings, sirens, various Coopids[1]—people'll pay good money just to look at it.

LIPOCHKA. They don't paint Coopids any more nowadays.

[1] These are not the only words that Podkhalyuzin mispronounces; *Olimpiada* is another.

PODKHALYUZIN. Then we'll let 'em paint bókays. [*Silence*] If you'd only agree on your side, then I don't want anything more in life. [*Silence*] How unfortunate I am, anyhow, that I can't say nice compliments.

LIPOCHKA. Why don't you talk French, Lazar Elizarych?

PODKHALYUZIN. Because there was no reason why I should. [*Silence*] Make me happy, Olimpiada Samsonovna; grant me that blessing, ma'am. [*Silence*] Just tell me to kneel to you.

LIPOCHKA. Well, do it! [PODKHALYUZIN *kneels*] What a horrid waistcoat you have on!

PODKHALYUZIN. I'll give this one to Tishka, ma'am, and I'll get myself one on the Kuznetsky Bridge, only don't ruin me! [*Silence*] Well, Olimpiada Samsonovna, ma'am?

LIPOCHKA. Let me think.

PODKHALYUZIN. Think about what, ma'am?

LIPOCHKA. How can I help thinking?

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, you don't need to think!

LIPOCHKA. I'll tell you what, Lazar Elizarych!

PODKHALYUZIN. What're your orders, ma'am?

LIPOCHKA. Carry me off on the quiet.

PODKHALYUZIN. But why on the quiet, ma'am, when your papa and mamma are so willing?

LIPOCHKA. That's quite the thing to do. Well, if you don't want to carry me off, why, let it go as it is.

PODKHALYUZIN. Olimpiada Samsonovna, just let me kiss your little hand! [*He kisses it; then he jumps up and runs to the door*] Daddy, sir!

LIPOCHKA. Lazar Elizarych! Lazar Elizarych! Come here!

PODKHALYUZIN. What do you want, ma'am?

LIPOCHKA. Oh, if you knew, Lazar Elizarych, what my life here is like! Mamma says one thing one day, and an-

other the next; papa, when he isn't drunk, has nothing to say; but when he's drunk he's apt to beat you at any moment. How's a cultivated young lady going to endure such a life? Now, if I could marry a nobleman, I'd go out of this house, and could forget about all that. But now everything will go on as before.

PODKHALYUZIN. No, ma'am, Olimpiada Samsonovna; it won't be that way! Olimpiada Samsonovna, as soon as we've celebrated the wedding, we'll move into our own house, ma'am. And then we won't let 'em boss us. No, here's an end to all that, ma'am! That'll do for them—they ran things in their day, now it's our turn.

LIPOCHKA. Just look here, Lazar Elizarych, we shall live by ourselves at our house, and they by themselves at their house. We'll do everything fashionably, and they, just as they please.

PODKHALYUZIN. That's the idea, ma'am.

LIPOCHKA. Well, call papa now.

[*She rises and prinks before the mirror.*

PODKHALYUZIN. Papa! Papa! Sir! Mamma!

SCENE VI

The same, BOLSHOV, *and* AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA

PODKHALYUZIN. [*Goes to meet* SAMSON SILYCH *and throws his arms about him in an embrace*] Olimpiada Samsonovna has agreed, sir!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. I'm coming, my dears, I'm coming!

BOLSHOV. Well, that's talking! Just the thing! I know what I'm doing; it's not for you to teach me.

PODKHALYUZIN. [*To* AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA] Mamma, ma'am! Let me kiss your hand!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Kiss away, my dear; they're both clean. Ah, you blessed child, has it been long since you decided? Ah? Good heavens! What's this? I absolutely didn't know how to decide this matter. Oh, my own little darling, you!

LIPOCHKA. Mamma, I positively didn't know that Lazar Elizarych was such a well-educated gentleman! But now I see at once that he's infinitely more respectful than the others.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Well, well, well, you little goose! As if your father would wish you any harm! Ah, mamma's little dove! What a little story, eh? Oh, my holy saints! What in the world is this? Fominishna! Fominishna!

FOMINISHNA. Coming, coming, my dear, coming!

[*She comes in.*

BOLSHOV. Stop, you gabbler! Now you two just sit down side by side, and we'll have a look at you. Fominishna, bring up a little bottle of fizz.

PODKHALYUZIN *and* LIPOCHKA *sit down.*

FOMINISHNA. Right away, my dear, right away!

[*She goes out.*

SCENE VII

The same, USTINYA NAUMOVNA, *and* RISPOLOZHENSKY

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Congratulate the bride and groom to be, Ustinya Naumovna! God has brought us to a ripe old age; we have lived to see happiness!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What have I got to congratulate you with, my jewels? My mouth's too dry to sing your praises.

BOLSHOV. Well, now, we'll wet your whistle.

SCENE VIII

The same, FOMINISHNA, *and* TISHKA, *who is bringing wine on a tray.*

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Aha! here's a matter of a different sort. Well, God grant you live long, keep young, grow fat, and be rich! [*She drinks*] It's bitter, my jewels! [LIPOCHKA *and* LAZAR *kiss*] Ah! that sweetens it!

BOLSHOV. Just let me drink their health. [*He takes the glass;* LIPOCHKA *and* LAZAR *stand up*] Live as you think best—you're reasonable beings. But so that you won't find life a bore, the house and shops go to you, Lazar, in place of dowry, and I'll throw in some ready cash.

PODKHALYUZIN. Many thanks, daddy; I'm well satisfied with what you've done for me as it is.

BOLSHOV. Nothing to thank me for! They're my own goods—I made 'em myself. I give 'em to whomever I please. Pour me another! [TISHKA *pours another glass*] But what's the good of talking! Kindness is no crime! Take everything, only feed me and the old woman, and pay off the creditors at ten kopeks on the ruble.

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, daddy, that's not worth talking about, sir! Don't I know what feeling is? It's a family affair—we'll settle it ourselves.

BOLSHOV. I tell you, take it all, and there's an end to it! And nobody can boss me! Only pay my creditors. Will you pay 'em?

PODKHALYUZIN. If you please, dad, that's my first duty, sir.

BOLSHOV. Only you look out—don't give 'em much. As it is, I suppose you'll be fool enough to pay the whole debt.

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh, we'll settle it later, daddy, somehow. If you please, it's a family affair.

BOLSHOV. Come, all right! Don't you give 'em more than ten kopeks. That'll do for them. Well, kiss each other!

LIPOCHKA *and* LAZAR *do so.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Ah, my little doves! How in the world did it happen! I declare I've quite lost my head.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA.

"Whoever heard or saw such things?
The elephant's learning to fly with wings;
The hen laid a door-knob instead of an egg;
And piggy is dancing a jig on a keg!"

She pours out wine and goes up to RISPOLOZHENSKY; RISPOLOZHENSKY *bows and declines the wine.*

BOLSHOV. Drink to their happiness, Sysoy Psoich.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. I can't, Samson Silych—it turns my stomach!

BOLSHOV. Go along with you! Drink to their happiness.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. He's always showing off!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. It turns my stomach, Samson Silych! By heaven, it does! I'll just take a thimbleful of vodka. But my nature won't stand the other. I have such a weak constitution.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Bah! you long-necked goose! Nonsense—much your nature won't stand it! Give it here. I'll pour it down his collar if he won't drink it!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. No fair, Ustinya Naumovna! That ain't nice for a lady to do. Samson Silych, I can't, sir! Would I have refused it? He! he! he! What kind of a blockhead am I, that I should do anything so rude? I've seen high society, I know how to live. Now, I never refuse

vodka; if you don't mind, I'll just take a thimbleful! But this I simply can't drink—it turns my stomach. Samson Silych, don't you allow all this disorderly conduct; it's easy to insult a man, but it ain't nice.

BOLSHOV. Give it to him hot and heavy, Ustinya Naumovna, hot and heavy!

RISPOLOZHENSKY *runs away from her.*

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. [*Placing the wine on the table*] You shan't get away from me, you old son of a sea-cook!

[*She pushes him into a corner and seizes him by the collar.*

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Police!

All burst out laughing.

ACT IV

A richly furnished chamber in the house of PODKHALYUZIN

SCENE I

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA *is sitting luxuriously near the window; she wears a silk waist, and a bonnet of the latest fashion.* PODKHALYUZIN, *in a stylish frock coat, stands before the mirror. Behind him* TISHKA *is adjusting his master's clothes, and adding the finishing touches.*

TISHKA. There now, it fits you to a T!

PODKHALYUZIN. Well, Tishka, do I look like a Frenchman? Ah! Step away and look at me!

TISHKA. Like as two peas.

PODKHALYUZIN. Go along, you blockhead! Now you just look at me. [*He walks about the room*] There now, Olimpiada Samsonovna! And you wanted to marry an officer, ma'am! Ain't I a sport, though? I picked the smartest coat I could find and put it on.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. But you don't know how to dance, Lazar Elizarych.

PODKHALYUZIN. What of it—won't I learn though, and the raggiest ever! In the winter we're going to attend the Merchants' Assemblies. You just watch us, ma'am! I'm going to dance the polka.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Now, Lazar Elizarych, you buy that carriage we saw at Arbatsky's.

PODKHALYUZIN. Of course, Olimpiada Samsonovna, ma'am! Of course, by all means!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. They've brought me a new cloak; you and I ought to go Friday to Sokólniki.

PODKHALYUZIN. Of course, most certainly we'll go, ma'am; and we'll drive in the park on Sundays. You see our carriage is worth a thousand rubles, and the horses a thousand, and the harness mounted with silver—just let 'em look! Tishka! My pipe. [TISHKA *goes out.* PODKHALYUZIN *sits down beside* OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA] Just so, ma'am, Olimpiada Samsonovna; you just let 'em watch us.

[*Silence.*

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Well, why don't you kiss me, Lazar Elizarych?

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, sure! Permit me, ma'am! With great pleasure! If you please, your little hand, ma'am! [*He kisses it. Silence*] Olimpiada Samsonovna, say something to me in the French dialect, ma'am!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. What shall I say to you?

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh, say anything—any little thing, ma'am. It's all the same to me, ma'am!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. *Kom voo zet zholi!*

PODKHALYUZIN. What does that mean, ma'am?

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. How nice you are!

PODKHALYUZIN. [*Jumping up from his chair*] Aha! now here's a wife for you, ma'am! Hooray, Olimpiada Samsonovna! You've treated me fine! Your little hand, please!

Enter TISHKA *with the pipe.*

TISHKA. Ustinya Naumovna has come.

PODKHALYUZIN. What the devil is she here for!

TISHKA *goes out.*

SCENE II

The same and USTINYA NAUMOVNA

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. How are you managing to live, my jewels?

PODKHALYUZIN. Thanks to your prayers, Ustinya Naumovna, thanks to your prayers.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. [*Kissing* OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA] Why, I believe you've grown better looking, and have filled out a bit!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Bah, what nonsense you're chattering, Ustinya Naumovna! Now, what struck you to come here?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What nonsense, my jewel! Here's what's up. Whether you like it or not, you can't help it.—If you like to slide down-hill you've got to pull up your sled.—Now, why have you forgotten me completely, my jewels? Or haven't you had a chance yet to look about you? I suppose you're all the time billing and cooing.

PODKHALYUZIN. We have that failing, Ustinya Naumovna; we have it.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Come, come now: just see what a nice sweetheart I got for you.

PODKHALYUZIN. We're well satisfied, Ustinya Naumovna; we're well satisfied.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. How could you be dissatisfied, my ruby? What's the matter with you! I suppose you're all the time bustling around over new clothes, now. Have you laid in a stock of stylish things yet?

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Not much so far, and that mostly because the new stuffs have just come in.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Naturally, my pearl, you can't help

it; let 'em be of poor goods, so long's they're blue! But what kind of dresses did you order most of, woollens or silks?

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. All sorts—both woollens and silks; not long ago I had a crape made with gold trimmings.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. How much have you, all-in-all, my jewel?

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Here, count: my wedding-dress of blond lace over a satin slip; and three velvets—that makes four; two gauze and a crape embroidered with gold—that's seven; three satin, and three grosgrain—that's thirteen; gros de Naples and gros d'Afrique, seven—that's twenty; three marceline, two mousseline de ligne, two Chine royale—how many's that?—three and four's seven, and twenty—twenty-seven; four crape Rachel—that's thirty-one. Then there are muslins, bouffe mousseline and calico, about twenty, and then waists and morning jackets—about nine or ten. And then I've just had one made of Persian stuff.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Lord help you, what heaps you've got! But you go and pick out for me the largest of the gros d'Afrique ones.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. I won't give you a gros d'Afrique. I have only three myself; besides, it wouldn't suit your figure: now, if you want to, you can take a crape Rachel.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What in time do I want with a tripe Rachel. Evidently there's nothing to be done with you; I'll be satisfied with a satin one, and let it go at that.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Well, and the satin, too—it's not quite the thing, cut ballroom style, very low—you understand? But I'll look up a crape Rachel jacket; we'll let out the tucks, and it'll fit you like the paper on the wall.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Well, bring on your tripe Rachel! You win, my ruby; go open the clothes closet.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Right away; wait just a minute.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I'll wait, my jewel, I'll wait. Besides, I have to have a little talk with your husband. [OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA *goes out*] What's this, my jewel, have you entirely forgotten about your promise?

PODKHALYUZIN. How could I forget, ma'am? I remember. [*He takes out his pocketbook and gives her a note.*

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Why, what's this, my diamond?

PODKHALYUZIN. One hundred rubles, ma'am!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Only one hundred? Why, you promised me fifteen hundred!

PODKHALYUZIN. Wha—at, ma'am?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. You promised me fifteen hundred!

PODKHALYUZIN. Ain't that a bit steep? Won't you be living too high?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What's this, you barnyard cockerel; are you trying to joke with me, man? I'm a mighty cocky lady myself!

PODKHALYUZIN. But why should I give you money? I'd do it if there were any occasion for it.

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Whether for something or for nothing, give it here—you promised it yourself!

PODKHALYUZIN. What if I did promise! I promised to jump from the Tower of Ivan the Great, provided I married Olimpiada Samsonovna; should I jump?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Do you think I won't have the law on you? Much I care that you're a merchant of the second guild; I'm in the fourteenth class myself, and even if that ain't much, I'm an official's wife all the same.

PODKHALYUZIN. You may be a general's wife—it's all the same to me; I won't have anything to do with you! And there's an end to it!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. You lie, it ain't! You promised me a sable cloak.

PODKHALYUZIN. What, ma'am?

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. A sable cloak! Have you grown deaf, maybe?

PODKHALYUZIN. Sable, ma'am! He, he, he!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Yes, sable! What are you laughing and stretching your mouth at?

PODKHALYUZIN. You haven't gone out for a stroll with your mug in a sable cloak[1] yet, have you?

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA *brings in a dress and hands it to* USTINYA NAUMOVNA.

SCENE III

The same and OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. What in the world is the matter with you; do you want to rob me, maybe?

PODKHALYUZIN. Rob you, nothing! You just go to the devil, and be done with you!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. Are you going to turn me out? And I, senseless idiot, agreed to work for you: I can see now your vulgar blood!

PODKHALYUZIN. What, ma'am! Speak, if you please!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. When it comes to that, I don't care to look at you! Not for any amount of money on earth will I agree to associate with you! I'll go twenty miles out of my way, but I won't go by you! I'll sooner shut my eyes and bump into a horse, than stand and look at your dirty den! Even if I want to spit, I'll never set foot in this street again! Break me in ten pieces if I lie! You can go to the infernal jim-jams if you ever see me here again!

[1] Russian fur cloaks, it may be useful to remember, have broad collars that can be turned up to protect the face.

PODKHALYUZIN. Easy now, aunty, easy!

USTINYA NAUMOVNA. I'll show you up, my jewels: you'll find out! I'll give you such a rep in Moscow that you won't dare show your face in public!—Oh! I'm a fool, a fool to have anything to do with such a person! And I, a lady of rank and position!—Fah, fah, fah! [*She goes out.*

PODKHALYUZIN. Well, the blue-blooded lady flew off the handle! Oh, Lord, what an official she is! There's a proverb that says: "The thunderbolt strikes, not from the clouds, but from the dung-heap." Good Lord! Just look at her; what a lady!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Bright idea of yours, Lazar Elizarych, ever to have anything to do with her!

PODKHALYUZIN. Really, a very absurd woman.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. [*Glancing out of the window*] I believe they've let daddy out of the pen; go see, Lazar Elizarych.

PODKHALYUZIN. Well, no, ma'am; they won't let daddy out of the pen soon, either; most likely they ordered him to the meeting of the creditors, and then he got leave to come home. Mamma, ma'am! Agrafena Kondratyevna! Daddy's coming, ma'am!

SCENE IV

The same, BOLSHOV, *and* AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Where is he? Where is he? My own children, my little doves! [*Kisses are exchanged.*

PODKHALYUZIN. Daddy, how do you do, our respects!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. My little dove, Samson Silych, my treasure! You've left me an orphan in my old age!

BOLSHOV. That'll do, wife; stop!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. What's the matter with you, ma? you're crying over him as if he were dead! God only knows what's happened.

BOLSHOV. That's just it, daughter; God only knows; but all the same your father's in jail.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Why, daddy, there are better people than you and me there, too.

BOLSHOV. There are, that's so! But how does it feel to be there? How'd you like to go through the street with a soldier? Oh, daughter! You see they've known me here in this city for forty years; for forty years they've all bowed to me down to their belts, but now the street brats point their fingers at me.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. You haven't any color at all, my darling! You look like a ghost.

PODKHALYUZIN. Ah, daddy, God is merciful! When the rough places are smoothed over it'll all be pleasant again. Well, daddy, what do the creditors say?

BOLSHOV. Here's what: they've agreed on the terms. "What's the use," they say, "of dragging it out? Maybe it'll do good, maybe it won't; but just give something in cash, and deuce take you!"

PODKHALYUZIN. Why not give 'em something, sir! By all means do, sir! But do they ask much, daddy?

BOLSHOV. They ask twenty-five kopeks.

PODKHALYUZIN. That's a good deal, daddy!

BOLSHOV. Well, man, I know myself that it's a good deal; but what's to be done? They won't take less.

PODKHALYUZIN. If they'd take ten kopeks, then it'd be all right sir. Seven and a half for satisfaction, and two and a half for the expenses of the meeting.

BOLSHOV. That's the way I talked; but they won't listen to it.

PODKHALYUZIN. They carry it blamed high! But won't they take eight kopeks in five years?

BOLSHOV. What's the use, Lazar, we'll have to give twenty-five; that's what we proposed at first.

PODKHALYUZIN. But how, daddy! You yourself used to say not to give more than ten kopeks, sir. Just consider yourself: at the rate of twenty-five kopeks, that's a lot of money. Daddy, wouldn't you like to take a snack of something, sir? Mamma! order them to bring some vodka, and have them start the samovar; and we, for company's sake, 'll just take a thimbleful, sir.—But twenty-five kopeks's a lot, sir!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Right away, my dear, right away! [*She goes out.*

BOLSHOV. But what are you talking to me for: of course, I know it's a good deal, but how can I help it? They'll put you in the pen for a year and a half; they'll have a soldier lead you through the streets every week, and if you don't watch out, they'll even transfer you to prison: so you'd be glad to give even half a ruble. You don't know where to hide yourself from mere shame.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA *enters with vodka;* TISHKA *brings in relishes, and goes out.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. My own little dove! Eat, my dear, eat! I suppose they half starve you there!

PODKHALYUZIN. Eat, daddy! Don't be particular; we're offering you such as we have.

BOLSHOV. Thanks, Lazar, thanks! [*He drinks*] Take a drink yourself.

PODKHALYUZIN. Your health! [*He drinks*] Mamma, won't you have some, ma'am? Please do!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Holy saints, what am I to do now? Such is the will of God! O Lord, my God! Ah, my own little dove, you!

PODKHALYUZIN. Ah, mamma, God is merciful; we'll get out of it somehow. Not all at once, ma'am!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Lord grant we may! As it is, it makes me pine away simply looking at him.

BOLSHOV. Well, what about it, Lazar?

PODKHALYUZIN. Ten kopeks, if you please, I'll give, sir, as we said.

BOLSHOV. But where am I going to get fifteen more? I can't make 'em out of door-mats.

PODKHALYUZIN. Daddy, I can't raise 'em, sir! God sees that I can't, sir!

BOLSHOV. What's the matter, Lazar? What's the matter? What have you done with the money?

PODKHALYUZIN. Now you just consider: here I'm setting up in business—have fixed up a house. But do have something to eat, daddy! You can have some Madeira if you want it, sir! Mamma, pass daddy something.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Eat, Samson Silych, dear! Eat! I'll pour out a little punch for you, dear!

BOLSHOV. [*Drinks*] Rescue me, my children, rescue me!

PODKHALYUZIN. Here, daddy, you were pleased to ask what I had done with the money?—How can you ask, sir? Just consider yourself: I'm beginning to do business; of course, without capital it's impossible, sir; there's nothing to begin on. Here, I've bought a house; we've ordered everything that a good house ought to have, horses, and one thing and another. Just consider yourself! One has to think about the children

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Why, daddy, we can't strip ourselves bare! We're none of your common townspeople.

PODKHALYUZIN. Daddy, please consider: to-day, without capital, sir, without capital you can't do much business.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. I lived with you until I was

twenty years old, daddy, and was a regular stay-at-home. What, would you have me give back the money to you, and go about again in calico-print clothes?

BOLSHOV. What are you saying? What are you saying? Recollect! You see I'm not asking any kindness of you, but my rights. Are you human beings?

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Why, of course, daddy, we're human beings; we're not animals.

BOLSHOV. Lazar, you just recollect; you see, I've given away everything to you, fairly wiped my slate clean; here's what I've got left, you see! You see, I took you into my house when you were a little rascal, you heartless scoundrel! I gave you food and drink as if I were your own father, and set you up in the world. But did I ever see any sort of gratitude in you? Did I? Recollect, Lazar, how many times have I noticed that you were light-fingered! What of it? I didn't drive you away as if you were a beast, I didn't tell on you all over town. I made you my head clerk; I gave all my property away to you; and to you, Lazar, I gave even my daughter, with my own hand. If you hadn't received permission from me, you'd never have dared look at her.

PODKHALYUZIN. If you please, daddy, I feel all that very keenly, sir.

BOLSHOV. Yes, you do! You ought to give everything away as I did, and leave yourself nothing but your shirt, just to rescue your benefactor. But I don't ask that, I don't need to; you simply pay out for me what's expected now.

PODKHALYUZIN. And why shouldn't I pay, sir? Only they ask a price that's wholly unreasonable.

BOLSHOV. But am *I* asking it? I begged out of every one of your kopeks I could; I begged, and bowed down to

their feet; but what can I do, when they won't come down one little bit?

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. We have told you, daddy, that we can't pay more than ten kopeks—and there's no use saying any more about it.

BOLSHOV. And so, daughter, you say: "Go along now, you old devil, you, into the pen! Yes, into the pen! Off to prison with him, the old blockhead! And it serves him right!"—Don't chase after great wealth, be contented with what you have. But if you do chase after wealth, they'll take away the last you have, and strip you clean. And it'll come about that you'll run out onto the Stone Bridge, and throw yourself into the river Moscow. And they'll haul you out by your tongue, and put you in prison. [*All are silent;* BOLSHOV *drinks*] But you just think a bit: what kind of a walk am I going to have to the pen now? How am I going to shut my eyes? Now the Ilyínka will seem to me a hundred miles long. Just think, how it will seem to walk along the Ilyínka! It's just as if the devils were dragging my sinful soul through torment; Lord, forgive me for saying so! And then past the Iver Chapel:[1] how am I going to look upon her, the Holy Mother?—You know, Lazar; Judas, you see, sold even Christ for money, just as we sell our conscience for money. And what happened to him because of it?—And then there are the government offices, the criminal tribunal!—You see, I did it with set purpose, with malice aforethought.—You see, they'll exile me to Siberia. O Lord!—If you won't give me the money for any other reason, give it as charity, for Christ's sake.

[*He weeps.*

PODKHALYUZIN. What's the matter, what's the matter, daddy? There, there, now! God is merciful! What's

[1] In which there is a miracle-working image of the Virgin.

the matter with you? We'll fix it up somehow. It's all in our hands.

BOLSHOV. I need money, Lazar, money. There's nothing else to fix it with. Either money or Siberia.

PODKHALYUZIN. And I'll give you money, sir, if you'll only let up. As it is, I'll add five kopeks more.

BOLSHOV. What have we come to! Have you any Christian feeling in you? I need twenty-five kopeks, Lazar!

PODKHALYUZIN. No, daddy, that's a good deal, sir; by heaven, that's a good deal!

BOLSHOV. You nest of snakes!

[*He falls with his head upon the table.*

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Barbarian, you barbarian! Robber that you are! You shan't have my blessing! You'll dry up, money and all; you'll dry up, dying before your time! You robber! Robber that you are!

PODKHALYUZIN. That'll do, mamma; you're angering God. Why are you cursing me when you haven't looked into the business? You can see that daddy has got a bit tipsy, and you start to make a row.

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. It would be better for you, ma, to keep still! You seem to enjoy sending people to the third hell. I know: you'll catch it for this. It must be for that reason God didn't give you any more children.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Keep still yourself, shameless creature! You were enough of a punishment for God to send me!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. You think everybody's shameless and that you're the only good person. But you ought to take a good look at yourself: all you can do is fast one day extra every week, and not a day goes by that you don't bark at somebody.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Shame on you! Shame on you! Oh! Oh! Oh!—I'll curse you in all the churches!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Curse away if you want to!

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Yes, that's it! You'll die, and not rot! Yes!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Much I shall!

BOLSHOV. [*Rising*] Well, good-by, children!

PODKHALYUZIN. Why, daddy, sit still! We've got to settle this business somehow or other.

BOLSHOV. Settle what? I see plainly enough that the jig is up. You'll make a mistake if you don't do me up brown! Don't you pay anything for me; let 'em do what they please. Good-by, it's time I was going.

PODKHALYUZIN. Good-by, daddy! God is merciful—you'll get out of this somehow.

BOLSHOV. Good-by, wife.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Good-by, Samson Silych, dear! When'll they let us come to see you in jail?

BOLSHOV. Don't know.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. Then I'll inquire, otherwise you'll die there without our seeing you.

BOLSHOV. Good-by, daughter! Good-by, Olimpiada Samsonovna! Well, now you're going to be rich, and live like a princess. That means assemblies and balls—devil's own amusements! But don't you forget, Olimpiada Samsonovna, that there are cells with iron bars, and poor prisoners are sitting in them. Don't forget us poor prisoners. [*He goes out with* AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA.

PODKHALYUZIN. Ah! Olimpiada Samsonovna, ma'am! How awkward, ma'am! I pity your father, by heaven I pity him, ma'am! Hadn't I better go myself and compound with his creditors? Don't you think I'd better, ma'am?

Yet he himself will soften them better. Ah! Or shall I go? I'll go, ma'am! Tishka!

OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA. Do just as you please—it's your business.

PODKHALYUZIN. Tishka! [TISHKA *enters*] Give me my old coat, the worst one there is. [TISHKA *goes out*] As I am, they'd think I must be rich; and in that case, there'd be no coming to terms.

SCENE V

The same, RISPOLOZHENSKY *and* AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA

RISPOLOZHENSKY. My dear Agrafena Kondratyevna, haven't you pickled your cucumbers yet?

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA. No, my dear. Cucumbers now, indeed! What do I care about them! But have you pickled yours?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Certainly we have, my dear lady. Nowadays they're very dear; they say the frost got them. My dear Lazar Elizarych, how do you do? Is that vodka? I'll just take a thimbleful, Lazar Elizarych.

AGRAFENA KONDRATYEVNA *goes out with* OLIMPIADA SAMSONOVNA.

PODKHALYUZIN. Why is it you've favored us with a visit, may I inquire?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. He, he, he!—What a joker you are, Lazar Elizarych! Of course you know why.

PODKHALYUZIN. And what may that be, I should like to know, sir?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. For money, Lazar Elizarych, for money! Anybody else might come for something different, but I always come for money!

PODKHALYUZIN. You come mighty blamed often for money.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. How can I help it, Lazar Elizarych, when you give me only five rubles at a time? You see I have a family.

PODKHALYUZIN. You couldn't expect me to give you a hundred at a time!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. If you'd give it to me all at once, I shouldn't keep coming to you.

PODKHALYUZIN. You know about as much about business as a pig does about pineapples; and what's more, you take bribes. Why should I give you anything?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Why, indeed!—You yourself promised to!

PODKHALYUZIN. I myself promised! Well, I've given you money—you've made your profit, and that'll do; it's time to turn over a new leaf.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What do you mean by "time to turn over a new leaf"? You still owe me fifteen hundred rubles.

PODKHALYUZIN. Owe you! Owe you! As if you had some document! And what for? For your rascality!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What do you mean by "rascality"? For my toil, not for my rascality!

PODKHALYUZIN. Your toil!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Well, whatever it may be for, just give me the money, or a note for it.

PODKHALYUZIN. What, sir! A note! Not much, you come again when you're a little older.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Do you want to swindle me with my little children?

PODKHALYUZIN. Swindle, indeed! Here, take five rubles more, and go to the devil.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. No, wait! You'll not get rid of me with that.

TISHKA *enters.*

PODKHALYUZIN. What are you going to do to me?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. My tongue isn't bought up yet.

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh, perhaps you want to lick me, do you?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. No, not lick you, but to tell the whole thing to all respectable people.

PODKHALYUZIN. What are you going to talk about, you son of a sea-cook! And who's going to believe you?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Who's going to believe me?

PODKHALYUZIN. Yes! Who's going to believe you? Just take a look at yourself!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Who's going to believe me? Who's going to believe me? You'll see! Yes, you'll see! Holy saints, but what can I do? It's my death! He's swindling me, the robber, swindling me! No, you wait! You'll see! It's against the law to swindle!

PODKHALYUZIN. But what'll I see?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Here's what you'll see! You just wait, just wait, just wait! You think I won't have the law on you? You wait!

PODKHALYUZIN. Wait; yes, wait!—As it is, I've waited long enough. Quit your bluffing, you don't scare me.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. You think no one will believe me? Won't believe me? Well, let 'em insult me! I—here's what I'll do: Most honorable public!

PODKHALYUZIN. What're you doing? What're you doing? Wake up!

TISHKA. Shame on you; you're just running around drunk!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Wait, wait!—Most honorable public! I have a wife, four children—look at these miserable boots!—

PODKHALYUZIN. All lies, gentlemen! A most dishonorable man, gentlemen! That'll do for you, that'll do!—You'd better look out for yourself first, and see what you're up to!

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Lemme go! He plundered his father-in-law! And he's swindling me.—A wife, four children, worn-out boots!

TISHKA. You can have 'em half-soled.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. What're you talking about? You're a swindler, too!

TISHKA. Not at all, sir; never mind.

PODKHALYUZIN. Oh! But what are you moralizing about?

RISPOLOZHENSKY. No, you wait! I'll remember you! I'll send you to Siberia!

PODKHALYUZIN. Don't believe him, it's all lies, gentlemen! There, gentlemen, he's a most dishonorable man himself, gentlemen; he isn't worth your notice! Bah, my boy, what a lout you are! Well, I never knew you—and not for any blessings on earth would I have anything to do with you.

RISPOLOZHENSKY. Hold on there, hold on! Take that, you dog! Well, may you be strangled with my money, and go to the devil! [*He goes out.*

PODKHALYUZIN. How mad he got! [*To the public*] Don't you believe him, I mean him who was talking, gentlemen—that's all lies. None of that ever happened. He must have seen all that in a dream. But now we're just opening a little shop: favor us with your patronage. Send the baby to us, and we won't sell him a wormy apple!

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